



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

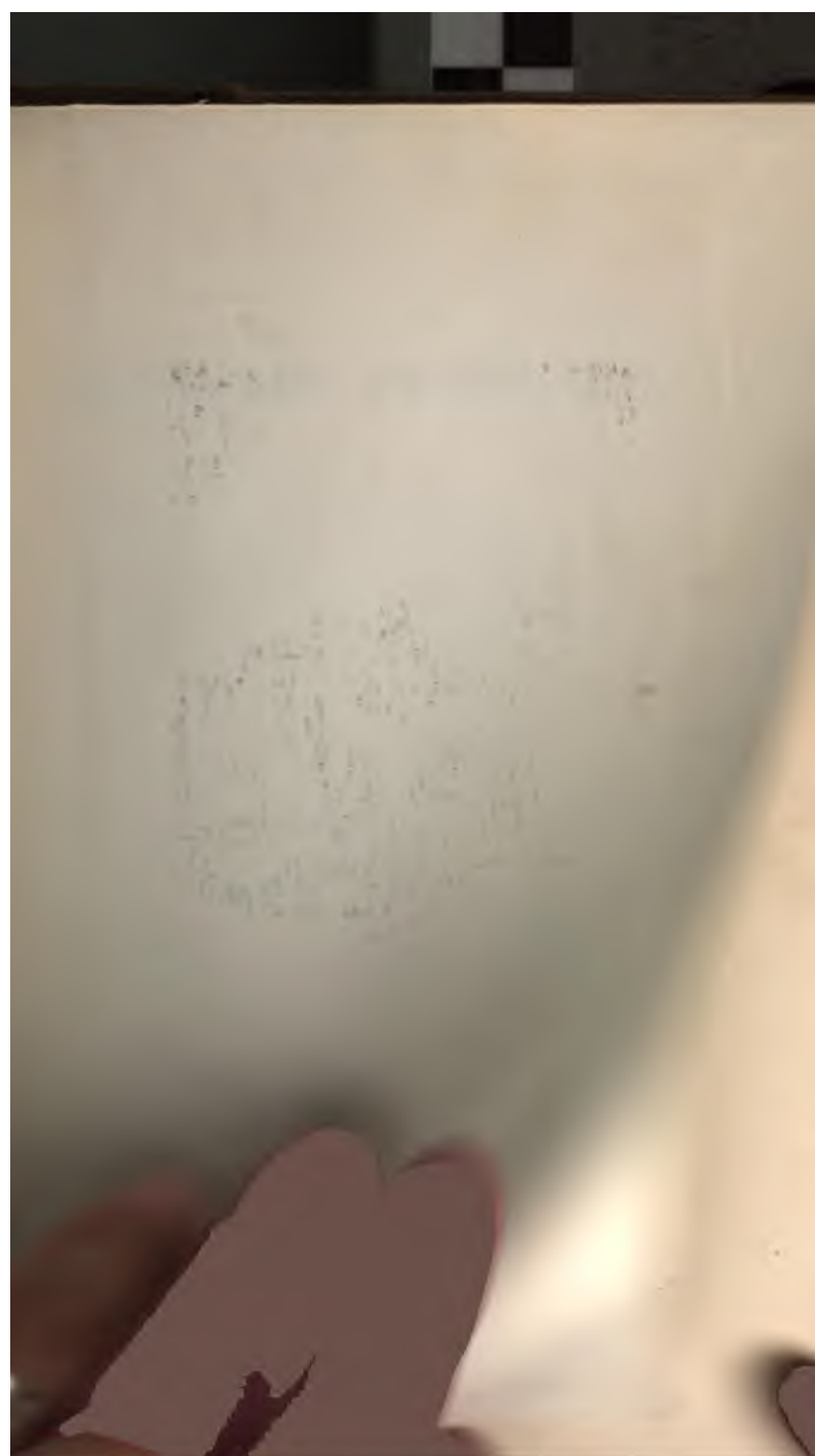
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARY







IMPORTED AMERICANS



1

2

3







1990

1991



The Real Problem

IMPORTED
AMERICANS

*The story of the
experiences of a
disguised American and his
wife studying the immigra-
tion question*    

By Broughton Brandenburg

With sixty-six illustrations
from photographs by the author



NEW YORK · FREDERICK A.
STOKES COMPANY · PUBLISHERS

325.73

B817


Copyright, 1903, 1904.
By FRANK LESLIE PUBLISHING HOUSE

Copyright, 1904.
By FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY

This edition published in August, 1904

Done

YHAXBLI 0807MAT2



*This volume is dedicated to my brave
little wife, who endured with heroism
conditions that, while not unbearable
for me, were superlative hardships for
a woman of delicacy and refinement.*

B. B.

*Clay Place, Manaronech,
June 23, 1904.*



CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I	THE IMPETUS AND THE METHOD . . .	1
II	LIFE IN A NEW YORK TENEMENT . . .	8
III	TO NAPLES IN THE STEERAGE OF THE <i>LAHN</i>	25
IV	CONDITIONS IN THE NEAPOLITAN ZONE,	47
V	IN THE ROMAN ZONE	61
VI	IN THE HEEL AND TOE OF THE BOOT .	71
VII	GUALTIERI-SICAMINO AND THE SQUAD- RITO FAMILY	83
VIII	THE SICILIAN COUNTRYSIDE	104
IX	THE DEPARTURE	119
X	FROM SICILY TO NAPLES	131
XI	THROUGH THE CITY OF THIEVES . . .	138
XII	ROGUERY AND ILLITERACY	151
XIII	THE EMBARKATION PROCESS	159
XIV	THE VOYAGE	171
XV	THE VOYAGE (<i>Continued</i>)	184
XVI	NEARING THE GATE	198
XVII	WITHIN THE PORTALS OF THE NEW WORLD	205
XVIII	THROUGH ELLIS ISLAND	215
XIX	THE DISPERSION	228
XX	THE STRUGGLES OF THE GUALTIERI BOYS IN NEW YORK	238
XXI	LEGISLATION AND EVASION	246
XXII	WHAT TO DO WITH THE IMMIGRANT .	297



LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

The Real Problem	<i>Frontispiece</i>
The Tenement in Houston Street in which the Author and his Wife lived (<i>The chimney- shadow marks their room</i>)	<i>Facing page 8</i>
Mrs. Brandenburg in her wretched Tene- ment-room	" " 12
Life on the Steerage-passengers' Deck on the <i>Lahn</i>	" " 28
Preparing to Serve a Meal on the <i>Lahn</i> from the Food-tanks and Bread-baskets	" " 38
Peasant Types	" " 50
Mangling Hemp	" " 56
Morning in the Village and Vineyards . .	" " 64
Threshing Beans	" " 72
Scilla—Draught-oxen of Italy	" " 82
The Messenger—The Guide—The House of the Squadritos—The Town (Gualtieri)	" " 90
Part of the Family gathered in the Kitchen (<i>From left to right: Ina, Tono, Giovanina, Antonio, Mrs. Squadrito, Giovanni, Jr., Nicola, Maria</i>)—Felicia Pulejo—Concetta	" " 98
Visitors in the Author's Room—Teresa di Bianca—The Old Woman up the Valley— Shyness in Shawl and Pattens—Small Children Labor in the Fields	" " 104

x LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Giacomo Marini, the Municipal Secretary—
Nicola Squadrito at Work (*Carmelo Merlino*
at the right Facing page 114

Ina and Her Friends in Procession to the
Church for Farewell Blessings " " 124

DEPARTURE FROM GUALTIERI

"Declaring" in the Messina Office—Party's
Baggage on Lighter—Friends, Neighbors
and Relatives " " 132

The Storied Vicolo del Pallonetto in Naples, " " 146

At the Doorway of the Capitaneria—Author's
Party on the Quay " " 162

MID-VOYAGE SCENES

Mora—Syrian Jews—Prostrated by the Swell
—Children Escaping Seasickness " " 184

Half a Dozen Races on Common Ground—
His Broth-cup—The Immigrant Madonna, " " 190

LIFE ABOARD THE *Prinzessin Irene*

Men's Sleeping-quarters—Ladling out Food
—The Purser Hurling Passengers About—
On the Fo'c's'l-head " " 194

Part of the Author's Party—All Eyes to the
Statue of Liberty " " 206

Croatians and Italians—Swedes Arriving—
Loading the Barges, New York " " 210

Rushing Immigrants on Barges—Inspectors
and Immigrants at Ellis Island " " 214

Stairway of Separation—Checking into Pens, " " 218

Excluded for Age—Waiting for Immigrant
Friends " " 222

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS xi

The Immigrants' Track Through Ellis Island, <i>Facing page</i>	227
Mr. Broughton Brandenburg, as he Looked when He Passed through Ellis Island as an Immigrant	“ “ 230
Stonington—The Barber-shop—The Squad- rito House	“ “ 234
Night-porter's Staff at Siegel-Cooper Com- pany's (<i>Nunzio Giunta in front of post</i>) . .	“ “ 242
Nicola Curro at Work—Ina Americanized— Saint's Figure, covered with Bags of Money	“ “ 264
Nicola Curro Studying English in the Author's Home in New York	“ “ 280



CHAPTER I

THE IMPETUS AND THE METHOD

THAT there was a tremendous increase in immigration in prospect was announced by the agents of the great immigrant-carrying lines of steamships as early as January of 1903. All Europe seemed stirred with that tide of unrest. It was to be a great year for the departure from the Continental hives of the new swarms, and an authoritative foreign journal prophesied that the sum total would be 1,500,000 for the twelve months.

In America the cry was redoubled that the doors of the United States should be altogether closed or rendered still more difficult to pass. The Shattuc bill was about to find favor in the House of Representatives, the Lodge bill was cooking in Boston, and in every newspaper or periodical of the land articles and editorials were appearing that attacked or defended various phases, conditions or proposed remedies of immigration. Even in the German and Italian papers, which speak for Germany, Austria and Italy, the most fertile immigrant-producing grounds, there was but the barest trifle printed that was *from the point of view of the immigrant himself*. In the American papers there was absolutely nothing.

One day I was in the Grand Central station in New York, ready to take a train for New Haven, and as I came up to the gate I saw, passing through before me, a group of more than twenty newly arrived Italians, following the leadership of one short, black, thick-set

2 IMPORTED AMERICANS

prosperous-seeming man who spoke Italian to the left and broken English to the right. They were tagged for Boston and other New England towns, and, bearing their heavy burdens of luggage and bundles, with faces drawn with weariness, eyes dull with too much gazing at the wonders of a new land, with scarce a smile among them except on the faces of the unreasoning children, they were herded together, counted off as they passed through the gate and taken aboard the train, much as if they had been some sort of animals worth more than ordinary care, instead of rational human beings. Here they were in charge of the conductor, who grouped them in seats according to the towns to which they were destined.

When I was seated and had unfolded my paper the first thing that caught my eye was an article in which a noted sociologist was liberally quoted recommending the total suspension of immigration for three years and *then* new laws admitting only those who would come with their families and were trained in some work demanding skill. The arguments were specious, but as I looked over the top of the paper at the poor creatures huddled in the car seats about, very thinly dressed for so cold a January day, it occurred to me that the true light, the revelation of the natural remedies and the only real understanding of the immigrant situation lay in seeing from the underside, in getting the immigrants' point of view to compare with the public-spirited American one.

That was the leaven and it grew. The idea ramified into a plan, and this plan was laid before Mr. Ellery Sedgwick, the editor of *Leslie's Monthly*, and very soon it was decided that I was to go seeking the immigrants' point of view and was to take my wife with me.

IMPETUS AND THE METHOD 3

All of the intricacies of how, where and just what, evolved slowly, but this in brief was our general plan: First of all we must choose the ground for our investigation. Since Italy sends not only three times more immigrants than any other country, but a larger proportion of the sort that are objected to in America, it was plain that our work lay among the Italians. We must know the language well enough to ask questions and understand answers; we must know the conditions of Italian life in America in order to know what good and what evil things to trace to their sources. To understand the people properly, we must live with them and be of them, and, to get the fullest grasp on the process of their transmutation we must become immigrants ourselves and re-enter our own country as strangers and aliens.

Therefore we must take up our abode in the Italian quarter, and, when duly prepared and informed, voyage to the home land with some of the returning Italians and, having learned the actual conditions there, come back in the steerage and pass through Ellis Island, bringing with us some typical immigrant family whose exact circumstances we had fully learned in their native community. Using them as a central strand we would weave a story of small things that should be worthy of being taken into reckoning by thinking minds, as a new and important fund of information.

Though we knew full well the hardships which we must endure for many long months, the difficulties which would arise like forbidding barriers, I am free to say that the things on which we had counted and against which we had armed ourselves did not come to pass for the most part; while a multitude of

4 IMPORTED AMERICANS

things happened that were as unexpected as gold in breakfast food.

Work began at once, by the book, on the language, and while in the wilds of Yucatan in February we were studying Italian. In March we landed in New York late one night from the Ward liner *Monterey*, and the very next day went into the Italian quarter seeking a place to live. When we had been in the reeking streets, amid the tumult of innumerable children, and had entered a few of the tenements, my wife turned pale and sick and said:

"Don't think I am faltering at the threshold; but, please, if we must go through all this, let us have a week of comfort and preparation. Then we will take the plunge."

Thus I knew how much harder it was for her, with all her love of comfort and her accustomedness to it, to forsake it for any purpose, however important or worth while, than it was for me, who, manlike, enjoy "the fare of the field, and the habit of the strange land." And thereafter, particularly when we were in the steerage of the *Prinzessin Irene* and were bound home, actually counting the half-hours of the twelve-day voyage amid utter wretchedness, never did I hear one complaint from her lips or did she give other sign of failing.

At the very outset we had difficulty in gaining admission to any all-Italian house. In the tenements where several rooms were to be had, the Italian real-estate agents eyed us with suspicion and averred solemnly that they were all full, even to the roof. This they asserted, notwithstanding empty apartments to be seen from the street and "Rooms to Let" signs without number. In the boarding houses we were met with a very cold reception even before it was known

IMPETUS AND THE METHOD 5

what we wanted. In the Italian hotels it was the same way with the exception of one south of Washington Square, and there the proprietor kindly offered to let us in at twice the ordinary price, according to the rates tacked on the room doors. At last, however, we came to the domicile of the Chevalier Celestin Tonella. Here we found our haven.

It was some time after we were settled before we learned that we were under the roof of a nobleman. If we had been familiar with the nice distinctions of Italian caste, however, we should have known it instantly. The three houses Nos. 141, 145, 147 West Houston Street, entered by the door of No. 147, seemed to us very little different from many of the other tenements in which we had been, and indeed they were not. The difference all lay in the master not in the mansion. If I had known before paying my rent in advance that my landlord had a title, I should have demurred, thinking that in his house there would be life a little too high in grade for the real Italian quarter; but before I knew the Chevalier's station, I had learned that we were in the proper element and surrounded by the very atmosphere we sought, though the same at meal times would have almost killed a strong man in his prime.

Just before we gained admittance to the desired quarters we were in the office of a real-estate man who has an exclusively Italian custom in the lower West Side quarter, renting to people of his own race and tongue houses owned by wealthy people up-town. When he had refused to give us an opportunity at anything on his lists I said to him:

"See here. We have been hunting rooms all day. We have been frustrated from Mulberry Street to Fifteenth. I have got money and can give references,

6 IMPORTED AMERICANS

but nobody seems to care about either. What is the matter? Why can we not get into an Italian house?"

"Scoose me, mister, bot wye youse want to?"

"We want to live with Italians in order to learn to speak Italian properly."

"Yes, all ri—ght. I don' know wye." A shrug of the shoulders and a side glance with dropped eyes. "Mebbe Eyetayun peoples sink-a youse try to fin' a out somesings, mebbe don' a want somebodys fin' youse. Youse knows deys-a only dirty dagoes."

This last was said with a bitterness which showed clearly how well the Italians understand the tolerant, semi-contemptuous regard of Americans towards them and how keenly they resent it. I understood at once how and why they suspected us because we, who were obviously "Americans proper" as they nicely express the difference between the native and imported American, desired to come and make our home among them. Only a knowledge that the persons are still living and a wholesome respect for the libel law prevent me from telling how well founded were the suspicions among the Italians of the "Americans proper" who lived about us later.

Thus, to begin with we were met by the barrier of suspicion and misunderstanding raised against us by all our neighbors. We had to overcome it carefully or do our work in spite of it.

CHAPTER II

LIFE IN A NEW YORK ITALIAN TENEMENT

OUR room was about seven feet wide and twelve long. It was half of a room of ordinary size that had been cut nicely in two by a partition, and had a sort of small extension at the back that looked out on the rear of the house. It was barely possible to get by the bed in order to pass from the door to the rear window. The bed itself, while not being a geometrical point, had neither length, breadth, nor thickness. In one corner was a small cook-stove, that should have been under pension. There was a small table in the tiny extension, covered with a dark-patterned piece of oilcloth. A careful inspection of it showed me that dark oilcloth *has* certain advantages over light. A kerosene lamp with a discouragingly short wick stood on an imitation marble mantelpiece that was a relic of the days of the old mansion's former glory.

We contrived to get one steamer trunk under the bed, and as soon as we could sort out articles of essential wear, the others drifted to that place of uncertainty called "storage."

Some little time after we had entered the house we were able to get a room twice the size on the top floor, and we contrived to dispose ourselves with some degree of comfort. Aside from the size and the addition of a good bed, the room and furnishings of our second chamber agreed with the first.

8 IMPORTED AMERICANS

During the time we lived there we dressed in such a manner as not to attract the attention of the people about us to the fact that we were not of them, only keeping with us apparel for use when we indulged ourselves in an evening's relaxation from the hard life and stole away up-town for a bite of something good to eat and the cheer of the voices of friends speaking unadulterated English.

The first night we were in the house we were very weary with the operation of shifting bases and change of station in life, and, finding it almost impossible to read by the light of the lamp, we sought repose about ten o'clock; but just about that time from the floor below us, where we could hear the babel of the voices of men and women, as it were a family party or something of the sort, there began to come a series of vocal explosions. It seemed to be two or more men shouting single words at each other in concert. They enunciated with great energy, at first in a repressed sort of way, but after ten or fifteen words their voices rose to an alarming pitch. Then would come a pause filled in with laughter and chatter, and once more the word-slugging contest would begin. So fiercely were the words expelled that for a long time we could not tell what they were. At last we made out "sei" and "otto," and as it was impossible to go to sleep with so lively a social function going on below, I got up, lit the lamp and took up our Italian books. A moment's consultation of the books and a little listening showed us that they were counting, or at least hurling numbers at random at each other. It was inexplicable to us, but it was our first glance into the inside of Italian quarter life.

I was heartily glad, however, that the birthday party,



The Tenement in Houston Street in which the Author and his Wife lived (*The chimney-shadow marks their room*)

LIFE IN A TENEMENT 9

christening or wedding anniversary, whichever it was, must surely be a matter of rare occasion.

Imagine our feelings when ten o'clock the next night came and the same rumpus broke forth once more, only with greater vigor. In vain we conjectured the cause. Perhaps they were in the midst of a week's celebration of some church festival. Perhaps there was some sort of a tournament on.

At last I determined to investigate. Though it was a wet night and walls, ledges and railings about the rear of the house were dripping and slimy, I clambered down from the back window to a point where I could look in below.

There were two basement rooms opening into each other, and there must be a third that opened onto the street in front of the house. The first room was a much-cluttered kitchen with broken boxes of several sorts of macaroni exposed to view, a well-heated range, a cook in white clothes, innumerable bottles of wine on the shelves and dirty dishes on one side while the clean ones were in orderly piles on the other.

In the second and inner room there was a thick, blue atmosphere of pipe and cigar smoke through which the gas jets in the centre of the room flared sharply. Around the uncovered tables of varying sizes were Italians to the number of a score or more. More than half of them were in rough working clothes. Some had beer, some had wine before them and some were eating the stringing macaroni from large dishes heaped with it. Three of them were under the gaslight and were leaning forward in postures of straining excitement, and as each spoke a number he thrust out one hand or both with fingers held out,—three, four, seven, perhaps only one. All the numbers spoken were under ten, and the num-

10 IMPORTED AMERICANS

bers spoken did not correspond with the numbers indicated by the fingers. After watching them a minute I saw that each man was trying to guess what number the other man would indicate on his fingers, and a correct guess ended each bout; then would come laughter at the expense of the defeated one, and the game would begin over again for points.

Later inquiry as to the name and popularity of the game brought forth the information that it is called *mora* and is very general through southern Italy, being a favorite diversion among the country people. In Italy country boys will get together in a corner and play *mora* till they are exhausted, and in the place under us I have known the last hoarsely shouted number to sound after the hour of three.

As I climbed back into my own room I took with me the satisfying knowledge that we should probably hear *mora* and sing-singing every night while we dwelt in the place. It was evidently a restaurant and used as a sort of club house by a company of the convivial and congenial. There was not the slightest indication on the street front that the place was anything but an ordinary tenement basement.

The commissary end of our campaign after information was very weak. Home cooking is well enough with facilities. It is a destroyer of peace and well-being, without them. Therefore we began a series of disastrous experiments in lunching and dining out in first one and then the other Italian restaurants thereabouts, and after a plucky and determined resistance to the enemy we succumbed. Our stomachs demanded time to accustom themselves to the change, and so we took to Italian fare only in moderation, securing at last an ability to eat and enjoy it.

LIFE IN A TENEMENT 11

After I had discovered that there was a restaurant in the basement of our own house, I made inquiry of the landlord as to its desirability, and on his recommendation we went in there one day for lunch. We found that, as I had surmised, there was a third room in the front, and in this a large table was set. At its head was an important-looking red-bearded gentleman whom I knew was an *editore* of one of the many small Italian publications put forth in New York. Ranged down each side were men of several sorts. There was an animated conversation in progress as we entered, but a sudden silence fell as they saw us. Looks of suspicion passed, and though they greeted us in a constrained sort of way as we took places at the foot of the table, I could see that we represented a note of discord. The proprietor, who was cook as well, and his wife and sister-in-law were effusive in their welcome, and after we had tasted the character of the food I felt that we were nearer a solution of the eating question than at any time before. The men at the table were visibly relieved when they found that we could not understand Italian, and ventured remarks now and then to test our knowledge. Some of these were of a very personal nature concerning us; and, being able to understand some few of the words and phrases, I knew this but behaved as if there were no word of all they said that had any meaning to me.

That evening when we came in for dinner we found that a little table for the two of us had been put in a remote corner of the long room, and though the places in which we had been at noon were empty, plates and chairs had been removed, so that we well knew "outsiders," especially ladies, were not desired at their board.

12 IMPORTED AMERICANS

Once they were perfectly sure we did not understand anything of which they spoke, they became just as free of speech as they must have been before. This was very fine for us. An understanding of the good Italian they spoke, which was barely sufficient to trace and know the current of conversation, rapidly broadened into ability to get more of the full meaning. It was ill for speaking-practice, though, for we used only English in the place, and I found that if I used the Italian that I heard them speaking at the table, to any one outside in other parts of the Italian quarter there was an absolute failure to understand me. At first I thought this was because of my poor pronunciation and awkward attempts, but the more I listened the more I learned that we were absorbing better Italian than was spoken by the mass of Italians in New York, and when I first mentioned the subject to an Italian friend, newly made, he laughingly explained that there are about twenty varieties of Italian speech, and that in the restaurant in the Houston Street basement I was hearing Milanese while all about outside were Romans, Neapolitans, Genoese, Turinese, Calabrese, Sicilians, and so on. Greater knowledge of the language showed me that so wide are the differences that a man from certain portions of the north of Italy is almost unable to converse with a man from the south, even if *willing* to do so. There is the bitterest sectional feeling, and people of different provinces are constantly arrayed against each other. I found this feeling very strong between the Calabrese and the Sicilian.

The men who took lunch at the basement restaurant were of a more intelligent class than those who came there at night, and so, as we came to understand more each day, we began to learn more and more of the very



Mrs. Brandenburg in Her wretched Tenement-room




LIFE IN A TENEMENT 13

facts of inside life among Italians for which we were seeking.

I do not know that we got so much well-rounded information from their chance conversation as tips on the things for which to be on the lookout. Some little things in particular that had no bearing on generalities are contained in the following incidents.

Gossip one day told me that a certain editor of an Italian newspaper of some standing had written a scathing article directed against Mr. Frank Munsey, at that time the new owner of the *News*, and William Randolph Hearst of the *American* and *Journal*. He had said things which he felt sure would make both of those gentlemen get down their rapiers and do battle either editorially or in person. He hoped it would be both, as he felt he had a righteous cause and needed the advertising. The day his editorial was published he stayed close to the telephone all day in his office expecting a telephone message from one or the other. When the papers of both attacked editors appeared next day without even a one-line hint of the deadly blow which had been dealt them, the Italian editor very nearly fell to the floor in a frothing rage. For an hour he raved like a wild man and was only calmed by the assurance from a cool-headed friend that both were preparing overwhelming answers for their print next day, so he settled himself to write what he thought would be an anticipation of their replies. Not a sign did the two smitten ones give, and it was not long before some one found out through friends in the offices of both papers that in neither had either the first or second assaults in the Italian journal even been so much as heard of.

One of the men at the table had his father in this country with him, and the father, having been here two

14 IMPORTED AMERICANS

years and saved \$600 working in a piano factory for \$1.40 per day, wished to return to Italy to spend his last days and, desiring to save his passage money, had followed the example of another old man and arranged to get himself deported. I listened closely and heard the son telling with great amusement how "feeble" the old man became when he went to make his application for deportation as an alien who was unable to support himself in America because of age and ill health.

At another time a newcomer at the table related to an interested audience what had been told him of the very wild condition of the country even so far east as Kentucky. He gave some instances of a feud, that had been generally printed a short time before, as if they were the actual doings of hordes of savages in the mountains. He may not have been as far wrong as it seems at first glance, of course, but the incident aptly illustrated how little conception the mass of otherwise well-informed aliens have of the great country which is giving them more of comfort, liberty and opportunity than they have ever had before.

Our landlord and his wife represented a class which is taken all too slightly into account by those Americans who are interested in the immigration question; for it has an influence which, while positive in few things and negative in many, is nevertheless very strong and powerfully affects the destinies of Italians in America.

The Chevalier Celestin Tonella is a man of striking presence. He is large and heavy and has the erect bearing of a soldier. He has the dominant nose and the composed air of one accustomed to command. The time was when he stood well up in the army. His exact rank I never learned.

His wife is a small, slender, gray-haired woman with

LIFE IN A TENEMENT 15

the unmistakable stamp of the gentlewoman upon her, and she speaks a number of languages as well as having the deft-finger gift of making, painting, broidering and sewing, as is the way with Italian women of position.

Of their story I know nothing, except that once she was in the patronage of a duchess and was at court, and he was also in favor with the high and mighty; but now they are running Nos. 141, 145 and 147 Houston Street for a living and are here in America with no plans for going back to Italy. How or why they came, who knows? So far as the interests of this work are concerned I do not care, and have introduced them in so personal a fashion only because they are so typical a family of better-class Italians emigrated to America. Last year the number of alien immigrants landed in the United States who were able to come in the cabin instead of in the steerage was 64,269 and the year previous 82,055. Of this number more than one third were Italians.

In my personal acquaintance among Italians in New York there is a man who was formerly a priest in Rome and is now a saloon-keeper and banker on the East Side; another man who has four titles and an unenviable record in Genoa, Milan, Venice, Paris and Vienna, who owns three barber-shops up-town and two resorts in Elizabeth Street capitalized with the patrimony of a young gentlewoman of Udine who followed him to America when his family had cast him off and it was too hot for him to remain in Italy, France or Austria; a third man who is a banker not far from where we lived who is conducting a flourishing "padrone" business founded on funds which he abstracted while an official in Naples before that city was bankrupted by its rulers.

16 IMPORTED AMERICANS

There are three. I could give a number more, but those will suffice. The point in the whole consideration is that *the lower class Italians in this country continue to pay the respect and homage to those of their race who have been born to position, without regard to the changed and democratic conditions under which both gentleman and peasant are now living.*

An Italian of humble birth who may have prospered in this country and have risen to a position of commercial and political eminence among New Yorkers will cringe unhesitatingly to some worthless scamp who chances to be well born. I have seen this instanced many times and in various ways. Twenty years of residence and fifteen of citizenship in the United States will change the average Italian into a very American sort of person, but I know to a certainty that he will suffer silently at the hands of a countryman of superior birth what he would not submit to for one minute from an American no matter what might be the latter's station in life. It is certainly a curious fact.

In general it is safe to say that half of the Italians from the better classes who come to America are far more undesirable than any of the lower-class immigrants except *that* certain class of habitual criminals who are doing so much to get their race despised by honest, clean-handed Americans.

One of their worst influences is to retard the assimilation of their people by the great American body politic, by refusing to be themselves assimilated, even going so far as to send their children to private schools in order that they may not learn English, and in insisting on wearing clothes of imported make or pattern. They are by birth, tradition and intent the leaders of Italian communities in this country, and their prejudices and

LIFE IN A TENEMENT 17

examples confuse if not entirely divert the natural social development of their humbler countrymen all about them.

Many of them are estimable, as are Chevalier Tonella and his clever, cheery wife, but their influence is negatively wrong.

One evening I was sitting with an Italian carpenter, a friend of the landlord's, in a corner of a Thompson Street saloon, and we were discussing the effect of union-labor regulations on the labor of immigrants and the way in which skilled masons, carpenters, cabinet-makers, smiths, etc., are forced to become peddlers, common laborers, bootblacks, etc., instead of having opportunities to follow their trades, when we were interrupted by the sudden appearance of a very excited man. He was a young barber, flushed with wine and good fortune. He burst into the room with a shout and a rattle of oaths and slammed down a handful of mixed money on a table.

The people about were saying so much and delivering it in so short a time that it was a full five minutes before they began conversation *piano* enough for me to get the idea. The young barber had won three hundred dollars at *lotto* and had just received it.

I knew that in Italy nearly every block in the cities has its *banco di lotto* run by the government and supposed that the young chap had been playing the lottery from this side and had won but I soon learned that the national love of *lotto* gambling has been transplanted to America, and that since the laws here forbid lotteries the Italians of the country are forced to run them under cover, and do so very successfully. After that I often heard of plays made by my friends

18 IMPORTED AMERICANS

and of winnings now and then by people I did not know, but never at any time was I able to fathom the method by which the business was carried on. Instead of being officially conducted by any society, each lottery is entirely a private venture, and its patronage is confined to those who are *compare* as the dialect has it. It is a word difficult to render into English, but all those Italians who come from one town or province and have mutual interests and trust each other are *compare*. Not only does this freemasonry exist as to *lotto*, but it pervades all their other social relations. It is a potent force never reckoned with among those who persist in misunderstanding the "dirty dago."

Very soon after we had taken up our residence in the quarter I found out the true reason for the prospect of an enormously increased immigration for 1903. The ponderous articles and profoundly wise comments on the question had attributed it to a number of things. Among these were: an increasing demand for labor that made a market for the immigrants' muscles, advertising efforts on the part of competing steamship lines, oppression of the Jews, deflection of German emigration from South America to North America, increased taxes and failure of crops in southern Europe. Balderdash and folly! The truth was that every man who had any relatives to bring over to the United States had read of the new strictures in immigration laws that impended and was straining every nerve to bring them and get them passed before the new laws could be passed and put into effect. Thousands and thousands of people whom the laws would not have affected in the least came this last year when if there had been no change of legislation in prospect, they would have waited a year or two more. I know personally of a

LIFE IN A TENEMENT 19

score of families whose plans were affected by this very thing and *by no other consideration*.

It should be remarked at this stage that one of the first things I learned among the Italians (and I knew later that it extended to all races) was that the alien considers the United States code of immigration laws a very complex, fearsome and inexplicable thing, to be thoroughly respected but if possible, evaded.

More than once I have been asked the following question which bears its own token:

"If a man and his family are good enough to live in Italy, why are they not good enough to live in the United States?"

The records of immigrants who have gone insane either on shipboard or in Ellis Island, or have broken down as soon as ever they were safely landed in the United States, are striking proof of how persons entirely within the bounds of the laws worry over the chance of exclusion.

One day after we had changed into our third-floor room we heard a frightful row among the neighbors below. A moment's listening showed that some woman was berating a little girl, and some man was interposing in the child's behalf. I suppose it was a man and his wife and the eldest of their three girls, who lived on that floor. I cannot give the entire conversation, but the following extract will tell the story:

Said the mother in very forcible Tuscan:

"You *shall* speak Italian and nothing else, if I must kill you; for what will your grandmother say when you go back to the old country, if you talk this pig's English?"

"Aw, gwan! Youse tink I'm goin' to talk dago 'n' be

20 IMPORTED AMERICANS

called a guinea! Not on your life. I'm 'n American, I am, 'n' you go way back 'n' sit down."

The mother evidently understood the reply well enough, for she poured forth a torrent of Italian mixed with strange misplaced American oaths, and then the father ended matters by saying in mixed Italian and English:

"Shut up, both of you. I wish I spoke English like the children do."

A very sensible German whom I know, a man of good education and holding an important position in the Ward line, has often told me that he was compelled to learn to speak good English in order to keep from being laughed at by his children, who contrived to escape correction whenever he used broken English in arraigning them.

One of our methods of investigation was to go from one place of business to another in the quarter and, if possible, buy some trifle, meanwhile asking questions. We found that it is usually the children who do the reading, writing, interpreting and accounting in English for their parents, and an extremely bright and quick lot of youngsters they seemed to be. In some places we saw startling contrasts between the two generations: one rooted in all that is Italian and absolutely unable to allow themselves to be absorbed and assimilated and the other intensely and thoroughly American in every idea and mannerism. It would be easy to understand how this could be so had these same children been well mixed with native-born children, but in all that community and in the schools they attended the percentage of Italians was so great that one would have thought it was the native-born children who would have been swallowed up in Italianism. It is a remark-

able fact that the Italian children insist on learning and speaking English alone, though it is not the native tongue of more than one in ten persons about them.

One of the general conditions, to the true significance of which our attention was called by the conversation of the midday gathering around the table in the Houston Street basement, is the pernicious system of Italian "banks." They are scattered everywhere through the Italian colonies of New York, Boston, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, etc., and, being ultra-parasitical in their nature, their harmful agencies may be imagined.

In Greater New York, and in its New Jersey purlieus which are so closely connected that they pulse with the life of the great city, there are 412 Italian banks with charters to do banking business and fully as many more, that operate without charters. Many of these are combination businesses, money exchanges, steamship-ticket offices and banks, groceries and banks, saloons and banks, and often only the patrons are aware that there is a banking business at all.

Furthermore the banking business is conducted on a very different basis from that usual in American banks of the various grades. Every employer of Italian labor in New York city knows that if he wishes to get a gang of men quickly to go to a job of work he need only telephone to an Italian bank. It will be found to be a very effective employment bureau. I have known specific instances where two large corporations, one commercial and the other industrial, being suddenly in need of labor, sent to Italian banks and got gangs of men. In the one instance the commercial corporation agreed to pay the bank \$7.20 per week per man, and the men received from the bank \$5 per week each. In another the industrial corporation paid \$1.50 per day, and the

22 IMPORTED AMERICANS

men got \$1.10. Three banks were concerned in the two cases. I learned of the low wage from the men, and in answer to my questions they told me that they were under the control of the bank. So I made inquiry of the two corporations and ascertained the above facts.

It is unwise and unjust to say that all of the little Italian banks are conducted on these lines or indulge in the following practices. There are many which are conducted by honorable, trustworthy men; but the greater number are the arbiters of the welfare of the Italian laborer in this country. They "bureauize" him privately, as the Italian government is endeavoring and failing to do officially. The poverty-pinched Italian peasant who is minded to come to America, earn a few hundred dollars and return can go to a money-lender at home and deliver himself into his hands. His fare will be lent to him, with other necessary money, at a usurious rate, frequently with no security save that the peasant, often unable to read or write and densely ignorant of what awaits him, is consigned to the Italian bank in America of which the money lender is a correspondent. When he reaches Ellis Island he is met by his "cousin," the bank's representative, and is duly discharged to him in New York or shipped to him by rail. If he has any money of his own, he deposits it in the bank; the bank lends him more money if he needs it; the bank finds his place to sleep and eat; the bank sees that he has a doctor if he needs one; and in a day or two the ignorant peasant with others of his kind is despatched to work in the Subway, steve on the docks, excavate for new buildings, delve in the mines, or whatever the work may be, fulfilling the agreement which the bank has made to deliver labor. This is an evasion of the

LIFE IN A TENEMENT 23

letter of the contract alien labor law and a flagrant violation of its spirit.

The bank, furthermore, is usually owned entirely or at least controlled by one man. It is the laborer's address for his mail from home. It writes his letters for him if he is unable to write. It forwards his savings home, minus a percentage. It holds his passport and any other valuable papers and in every way makes itself so essential to him that it has him entirely in its control. Often he realizes that it does this for from five to thirty per cent of his wages; more often he never knows how much short of his full due he is getting. Worst of all are the naturalization frauds, the wholesale political malfranchisements and increase of temporary immigration. In the last-named matter the banker rarely fails to urge the immigrant to return to Italy after he has saved two or three hundred dollars, because he will sell the immigrant his ticket home, clear the scores, realize his profits and be able to fill the place of the departing man with one who is "greener" and yet more ignorant. When the Italian has been here a year or two he begins to be difficult for the banker to handle, unless he be of that number who are born to be driven and sold like cattle.

As I have said there are many very worthy men engaged in banking and agency businesses among Italians, but there is a notable number who are born thieves and swindlers and have records at home which prevent their enjoyment of the balmy air of Italy for even one brief day. This matter is not overlooked at home. A joke in one of the Roman comic papers printed not long ago attests that.

A cashiered army officer is pictured as meeting a defaulting office-holder just emerging from a term in prison. This is the dialogue:

24 IMPORTED AMERICANS

Army Officer.—"What is the game now? An honest life?"

Late Office-holder.—"No, I think I shall open an emigrant bank in New York."

Army Officer.—"Indeed! I had thought of *that* myself."

CHAPTER III

TO NAPLES IN THE STEERAGE OF THE *LAHN*

WHEN midsummer came it was of course still too hot in southern Italy for us to go there with safety, let alone comfort, and it was becoming every day more onerous to live in the quarter. New Yorkers who dwell up-town and have entire houses, floors or apartments to themselves complain bitterly of the heat in summer, and, if possible, escape from the city. I have passed a whole summer in New York up-town, but, permit me to say that it is life at a seaside resort compared to what the people endure in the down-town tenement districts.

I think that we could have supported the heat, but the conglomerate of smells increased until it was overpowering, and each night the entire quarter was in tumult until well towards dawn. We learned then what we came to know so well thereafter, that when the Italian cannot sleep he fain would sing and play *lotto*, seven and a half, or *mora*. At last, in June, my wife became quite sick one day, and two days later we were off on a trip by steamer to Newfoundland, Labrador and Nova Scotia, returning early in August in time to sail on the *Lahn* of the North German Lloyd line.

The morning of our departure was a beautiful one, and as we crossed by the Hoboken ferry we could see the great German ships lying at the Hamburg-American and North German Lloyd docks. One of

26 IMPORTED AMERICANS

them had smoke pouring from her funnels, and a "blue peter" fluttered at her peak,—the signal that she was about to sail.

We were dressed in the plainest and cheapest of clothes, bought and worn previously in the quarter, and everything we owned we had stored except what could be got into a little \$1.10 imitation-leather dressing-case, with a shoulder-strap clipped into screw-eyes in the end to make easy portorage. Over half of its contents were photographic and stationery supplies. Instead of a shirt I wore the usual dark jersey such as many Italians in this country wear. Around my waist was a plain leather belt cleverly made of two strips between which reposed several thousand *lire*, easily put in or taken out through a neatly concealed aperture. Once thereafter a man handled that belt and threw it down as not worth taking, when it had in it a sum that would have gladdened his heart. I bore the one piece of baggage, while my wife carried, slung over her shoulder, the five-by-seven cartridge kodak which was our most jealous ward, our one essential treasure.

We had bought tickets at the Greenwich Street office of the North German Lloyd Company, where the steerage traffic is handled, under the names of Berto and Luiga Brandi and when doing so were asked our ages, places of birth, occupation, etc. On inquiry I found that the Italian law requires this of the ship's company, and that these sheets are used to keep track of returned emigrants and facilitate apprehension of any men who have avoided military duty.

As we pushed our way through the crowd on the dock, where freight and steerage baggage was being rushed out of the way of the "first-cabiners," who had

not yet begun to arrive, we were startled to find what an enormous number of fellow passengers we were to have compared to the steerage capacity of the ship and the agent's forecast of the load. He had conjectured 350 four days before. We sailed with more than 750 and certainly had a full house.

As we came up the gangway we were checked off by a short, heavy-set official in a black-lustre coat and dirty piqué cap; and a white-aproned stewardess of massive frame gave us two little red cards which read "Good for One Ration," while a steerage steward thrust into our hands a piece of horse-blanket goods of very poor material and very scant in dimensions, wrapped around a tin spoon, tin fork and tin cup, as well as a little pan about the pork-and-bean size. As we passed on into the crowd and into an unoccupied corner of the deck, and my wife unrolled her blanket and saw what was inside, a certain startled, stricken look came into her eyes. I knew that for the first time realization of a part of what was before her had come to her. I had often told her as nearly as I could, speaking from my own experiences as a sailor when studying seafaring life, of how steerage passengers lived on emigrant ships; but now any sort of "camping-out glamour" that had hung about it for her was dispelled, and she had a glimpse to the fore where misery, dirt and discomfort lay spread. If she was sorry she had come, she did not say so. I will confess that we had long since made a private bargain about the enterprise, and the consideration was well worth the while, so she showed no sign of wavering from her agreement.

The deck forward was the scene of the wildest commotion. Many people who were returning had been

28 IMPORTED AMERICANS

accompanied to the dock by their friends, and these, standing on shore, shouted vainly to their compatriots abroad. The noise was too great for speech except at close range. On every hand was piled baggage of all shapes and sizes: but I remembered it afterwards with envy when I saw the terrible mass of nondescript luggage which smothered the steerage on the return trip. The immigrant comes here with a huge pile of bundles, wooden boxes and flimsy bags; he goes home with good steel-framed valises and good trunks.

The chatter that prevailed about was mostly Italian, and I found that some of the dialects spoken I could not understand at all. I had not even encountered them in the quarter. Then, too, there were aboard, Greeks, Spaniards, Swiss, Germans, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Hungarians, Jews of several sorts, Syrians, etc. All spoke English in stages varying from a complete command down to the ability to swear. American "cuss words" are among the first things picked up and the last forgot. Strange, is n't it?

We had been promised that we might secure places, —after we were on board, in a closed compartment with four other people, a sort of superior steerage accommodation to be had at the expense of \$10 added to the \$35 for passage, which we had paid, and, leaving my wife seated in a clean spot on a hatch, I scoured the ship within the limits of the steerage to find those compartments, but all I got was a series of round cursings from the petty officers for bothering them while they were busy. I nosed about every corner of the ship forward, and if there were those compartments for three married couples, which are popularly supposed to exist in the emigrant quarters and had been referred to in serious editorials in notable publications



Life on the Steerage-passengers' Deck on the *Lahn*

2007
1000

within the past three months as being "all that the ship's people could be expected to give the third class in the way of comfort and privacy," I was unable to find them, nor did I see them or hear of them at any time later on the *Lahn* or any other ship I have inspected.

When I came on deck a stocky Italian, well dressed in American clothes, was holding an umbrella over my wife, for the sun was beating down on the ship's deck, and it was terrifically hot on board, moored as she was to the south side of the pier. They were chatting in English, and when I came up the stranger introduced himself as John Tury, of Lancaster, Pa., a peanut and fruit seller, who had been in this country five years and was now going home to Terra Nova, his native village in Sicily, for a brief visit. He had with him three cousins, younger men. His English was good though not perfect, and he refused to use Italian either with us or any one else on shipboard except when necessary. We sat talking for an hour or more, and became quite good friends, while waiting for the ship to sail and for a semblance of order to come about.

As yet we had no sleeping quarters. There seemed to be nothing to do but find places in the men's and women's compartments, and they were already so well filled when we went aboard that there was not a desirable bed left. I went below, where between decks the long, closely set double tiers of iron bunks were ranged, and looked in vain for a bunk that was not occupied by women and children or a piece of baggage left to signify that it had been pre-empted. There were some empty beds in the men's compartments, but they were badly located for light and air. There

30 IMPORTED AMERICANS

seemed to be nothing to gain by being in a hurry, and it was a long time till evening and bedtime. I knew there was more room on the ship, and I meant to have some of it even if I had to leave the steerage quarters; for our only interest in voyaging *to* Italy in the steerage was to seek information by association, whereas when *coming back* to the States it would be to be constantly with the family with which we expected to return.

When I returned to the deck, the big liner had slid out of the slip and was just forging her way down stream. Back on the pier was a black group of people waving handkerchiefs, parasols and hats. One large group of Italians I observed, watching the serrated profile of Manhattan with great interest, and I heard them talking of it as if they had never seen it before. So I said to one of them :

"Have you been in America and have not seen New York?"

"No, we came to Boston and by railroad to Scranton."

"Have you been at work in the mines?"

"Yes, they are just sending forty of us back home, and one hundred more will go next month."

I knew at once that the group was one of contract laborers who were being returned to their country, and by questioning him further I learned that they had been employed in the Lackawanna mines and had got employment through an Italian "banker" in Scranton who had sent two men to Italy in October of the year before, and during the winter they had hired in the vicinity of Potenza nearly three hundred men and despatched them in small parties on successive steamers to Boston in the months of March, April and May. Those who

were now returning were those who had been hurt, were sick, or were dissatisfied. Ten of them had had accidents and four had lung trouble; one poor fellow, he told me, being even then in the ship's hospital for steerage passengers dying with consumption, the result of his two years' work under ground.

The steerage passengers are supposed to form themselves into groups of six, and one man of the six is the one to receive the food as it is ladled out of huge tanks on deck by the steerage stewards; but not having had time to get properly assorted, dinner was now served to the steerage on a basis of "every man look out for his own."

I took our two tin pans and the tin cups, and plunged into the crush waiting to pass in line down the alley which was made by the tanks and baskets of food, ranged on the deck forward, and emerged in half an hour with two messes of macaroni and meat, two tin cups of highly acid and alcoholic wine and a cap full of hot potatoes.

As my wife looked the fare over when I brought it to her as she squatted in a nook sheltered from the sun, her lips trembled and she looked away towards Staten Island, then dropping into dim distance, as if wishing that she could by some magic word transport herself back to home-land soil once more. But in an instant her courage forced a smile, and we closed our eyes and ate and drank. It did not taste so bad, after all, but it was the look of it! And the way the women and children about us spilled it around on the deck and on themselves!

After we had eaten what little we might, we ensconced ourselves in a bit of shade and watched the crowd about. Every moment that passed, every bit of con-

32 IMPORTED AMERICANS

versation we caught, every small incident that occurred, showed us that for months we had been moving on a false plane, that just at that time when we thought ourselves in the genuine atmosphere of the life of the Italian immigrant in the New World, we were merely in that false temporizing atmosphere which he creates for himself and fellows, and from which he emerges only when he has become Americanized. In a few minutes we understood that the greater portion of the conditions, habits and operations which we had observed grew out of a feeling among them that they were merely temporizing here; that they had come to America to make a few hundred dollars to send or take back to Italy; and that it did not make much difference what they ate, wore or did, just so long as they got the money and got back. We could see plainly why it was that they had not risen above that state until they had been attracted and drawn into the real American life about them and had decided to remain. Here were hundreds of Italians just such as those who had been our household neighbors, but they were now a different people. They spoke freely, they bore themselves differently. There was a new certainty and boldness in their manner, for they were free and cut off from all things American, and, without imperilling a single interest, could return to everything that was Italian. Separated from its opportunities for betterment, their state in this country is inferior to that at home. This I can say conscientiously after long and careful observation.

We became acquainted with a woman who sat near us and who had a very pretty little girl. This woman said she came from Pittsburg, having been born of Italian parents in this country when the first Italians came from the north of Italy about twenty-five years ago.

She had married an Italian who had emigrated more recently, and now they were going home for a visit. She expressed intense disgust at the manner in which about one third of the women conducted themselves and allowed their children to behave. These women were the ones who made the noise, who scattered the filth, who sprawled about on deck and whose children, though on board but a few hours as yet, were sights to behold from being allowed to play in the scuppers where the refuse from dinner had collected in heaps purpled with the wasted wine.

From her we learned that her husband had been commissioned by a contractor in Pittsburg to go into the Italian provinces of Austria,—by which is meant the Austrian possession immediately around the head of the Adriatic, where the stock is Italian,—and engage two hundred good stonemasons, two hundred good carpenters, and an indefinite number of unskilled laborers. These people were to be put in touch with sub-agents of lines sailing from Hamburg, Fiume and Bremen, and these agents were to be accountable for these contract laborers being got safely into the United States. This woman informed us that many of her neighbors in Pittsburg had come into the United States as contract laborers, and held the law in great contempt, as it was merely a matter of being sufficiently instructed and prepared, and no official at Boston or Ellis Island could tell the difference.

We had been seated there a little while when there came by a sailor whom I had known in Hamburg some years before, and when I stepped aside to talk with him he was greatly surprised but remembered me, and we talked of many things which do not pertain to this consideration, save that just before he left I told him

34 IMPORTED AMERICANS

that we were on the lookout for the best sleeping and eating accommodations we could get in the steerage, and he answered, laughingly, that it was easy enough to get a good place and good things to eat—if I had money. I signified that I had.

He said he would send me a man who would be the person with whom to dicker. When he was gone, I sat down to wait. In about an hour I saw a tall, well-built man in ship's working rig, neither a sailor nor a steward, though moving about the steerage apparently looking for some one; so I moved his way, and when he saw me he sidled up cautiously, glancing up at the bridge, the forward end of the boat and the hurricane deck to see who might be observing. I spoke to him in German; but he replied in English and said we had better talk English, as it was the language that was safe from eavesdroppers.

He said he would sell us good beds for \$10 each, and we could buy food as we wished it. The food would be furnished by the first-cabin cook and would be savings from the galley. I demanded to see the beds first, and he led the way below. He took us to the entrance to the steerage compartments nearest amidships, where they opened into a little alleyway, at one end of which was one of the public bars for the sale of beer to those Italians, Jews, etc., who have learned to drink beer instead of wine. Beside the companionway which led down to the compartments for third-class passengers was a narrow one marked "Hospital." It led down past the steerage dispensary and to the two rooms apportioned for female sick. A narrow alleyway passed transversely to the other side of the ship, where there were two rooms for the male sick. My conductor was the hospital steward, and his offer to us was a bunk

each in the hospital wards, to which we could come at night as if we were patients. I could not see how it was safe to pay the money in advance, and then be ousted by the ship's doctor the first time he made his rounds. So this hospital steward, who was called Otho, surprised me by *summoning the ship's doctor*, a young German with a fringe of flaxen beard and bulging eyes, and allowing him to reassure me. It was all right. He got his share of the money from the rental of the bunks. All of them expressed a great fear and dread of the Italian doctor, the naval surgeon put on each emigrant ship by the Italian government.

In brief, as the beds were clean, the situation interesting and the hospital wards not very crowded, we accepted, and whenever the food on deck was not to our liking we could get an abundance from the hospital. It was rather wearisome, the last few days, though. Duck and chicken for every meal!

In my room there were two others who were paying rent for beds. One was a quaint old fellow from Tuckahoe, where he kept a saloon. He was on his way home for the fourth time. He wore a knit worsted green and yellow skull-cap day and night. It had a long yellow tassel on it, and some nights the tassel would get in his mouth and interfere with his slumbers—and mine. The second room had but one patient in it, one of the contract laborers from Scranton who was dying with consumption and prayed all day long for a sufficient lease of life to see the Bay of Naples, when he felt sure he would begin to get well at once. In three years he had saved and sent home \$820, which made his wife and family comparatively independent. He told me one day that even if he died as the result of his voluntary slavery in the mines he felt sufficiently

36 IMPORTED AMERICANS

repaid. I am glad to say that at least he reached home alive.

Late that afternoon we ran rapidly into murky weather and before long encountered a stiff gale, for August. It lasted all night and all the next day. I have been on ships steadier than the *Lahn*, and this gale took her nearly on the beam. The seasickness in the steerage was nothing short of frightful. Fortunately the people had had very little to eat—few of them much breakfast on sailing-day and very few any supper—so the most undesirable feature of a seasick crowd was limited. Also many of the third-class passengers had profited by the experiences of former voyages, and were able to take care of themselves and make less bother for their neighbors. Nevertheless, the compartments, in which the people were compelled to stay by reason of the deck weather, were in a state in describing which no good purpose is served. The steerage stewards were constantly busy with hose, sand buckets, brooms, etc.

Not only were we seeking general information, but we were hoping to get trace of some southern Italian family about to emigrate, in order to make them, as planned, the central feature of our analytical study of particular experiences; so, as the days went by, I inquired of each new person with whom I fell into conversation if he knew of such a family. Nearly every other man was either going over to get a wife for himself or already had a family in Italy and expected to return in October, or, if not then, in the following May. In a short time we had twenty families under consideration, but none of them seemed to be exactly typical; they were all too small, too large, too rich or from provinces that sent few emigrants.

There was a group of eight Greeks aboard who had been denied admission to the United States and were part of twenty-two men, women and children of mixed races who had arrived in New York on the *Lahn* and other North German Lloyd ships and were being returned by the company. The leader of the group was a huge fellow with very curly hair and beard who rejoiced in the name of Garareikophalous, and the third day I had a long chat with him with the aid of an interpreter from among our fellow passengers.

He said that all Greece was stirred up over the matter of emigration, and that in five years' time the number of Greeks coming to the United States would have increased a thousand per cent. The military duties in the kingdom were too onerous to be borne, and the Greeks already in the United States were prospering to such an extent that every remittance they made home fired the zeal of the people to follow after them. In nearly every village the candy-makers' shops were educating twice the usual number of apprentices, because the first emigrants had been candy-makers and they had established a foothold in the confectionery business and then sent for their candy-making relatives, which had caused a shortage in confectioners in Greece and in turn had created the impression that to get on best in America a Greek should be a candy-maker. Therefore every father who desired that his sons should go to America and send him enough money home to make him a rich man among his neighbors, apprenticed them to candy-making and after two years shipped them to New York. Some of the venturesome ones had branched out in the dried-fruit and olive-oil business, and he had heard they were doing very well. The result would be that as the

38 IMPORTED AMERICANS

various natural industries of Greece were taken up in America, and opportunities for labor and business offered, the emigration would swell to comparatively huge proportions.

A feature which he mentioned and on which I questioned him exhaustively was the advertising done by the steamship companies. He had some of the advertisements in his pockets, and some others he got from the members of his party. These he translated to the interpreter, who gave me a rough idea of what they were. I found they were not issued by the steamship companies but by sub-agents in Vienna, Bremen, Hamburg, Berlin, Naples, etc., and were of a very alluring sort. Two of them were poems expatiating on the beauties and wealth of America, and one was a clipping from a Greek paper supposed to be printed in New York, which related how a poor boy from Thessaly had gone to Cincinnati and opened a little candy store. He had broadened his business to a factory, and now had headquarters of four factories in New York, and had property to the extent of a million and a half drachmæ, or about \$200,000, to show for eight years' work.

Garareikophalous was very proud of the fact that he and his party had not been deceived by the sub-agents into going to America by the northern route. He averred that every effort is made by the sub-agents all through his country to get the emigrants to go overland to the German or French ports and take ship there instead of shipping at Naples or other Mediterranean ports.

I was unable to understand this action of the sub-agents until I had the light of later investigation upon it, when I found that it is a rule of the agents at the



Peasant Types

THE
SCHOOL
OF
THE
FUTURE

ports of embarkation never to allow an emigrant who has been denied admission to the United States to return to his native village if business is anything less than rushing from that section, for the reason that one emigrant who has failed to enter the United States can keep three hundred more from trying it. If the emigrant were returned to a southern port, the chances of his reaching home would be greatly increased. Emigrants returned to German and French ports are often reshipped to South Africa, South America and Mexico. Furthermore, when they are of the sort that needs coaching and schooling, in order that they shall not make the wrong answers at Ellis Island, the journey across the continent is used as an educational process in which they are carefully taught to dissemble. If there are members of the family who are physically unfit to be sent to Ellis Island, the sub-agents persuade the family to separate at the port of embarkation, and the diseased and deformed ones are sent across the channel into England and dumped in the charitable institutions. Sometimes they are sent from England, perhaps even from the port of embarkation, to Canada. The Hamburg-American line carries a notoriously bad lot of emigrants into Halifax. This feature I had investigated to my complete satisfaction in July.

More information that was decidedly to the point, I received from two Jews who were returning to assemble a large party of former neighbors and bring them to America, to sell off a quantity of property and in general readjust matters in a town not far from Odessa, in behalf of a coterie of relatives whom they had brought to America previously. Both had lived in Hungary and had traveled all through the districts from which comes the poor Jew of the South. They

40 IMPORTED AMERICANS

were going to Naples, by rail to Brindisi, then to Alexandria and Smyrna, and would go north from Constantinople. I will confess that it was not easy to elicit information from them, and very indirect processes were necessary; but here are some of the things learned.

Among Russians as well as Jews in Russia the limitations of the American immigration laws are very well known indeed by the priests, school-teachers, officials and others; and when a family desires to emigrate it begins by paying a weekly stipend to some person in this class, who puts them through a course of instruction as to how to carry money, answer questions, conceal diseases, etc. When the family starts it is met at all important stations by a Jewish committee and passed on. An ignorant Jew possessed of some wealth is almost certain to lose much of it at the hands of unscrupulous Jews who infest principal stations, border towns, etc. There have been cases where poor families even lost their little all to these harpies, ending by becoming charitable charges in England or Belgium. In many cases the family is part of a large group under the direct charge of a runner from some sub-agent's office, but this is usually the case when the people are very poor and obviously diseased. Groups like this are not delivered to the steamship agents at German and French ports, but are sent to a place called the Shelter for Poor Jews which has been established in London, and they are kept there many weeks if necessary, and then sent either to New York, Boston, Halifax or Montreal. Cases of trachoma are treated in this shelter, in great numbers, until the emigrant is ready to pass inspection. Those cases which are regarded as hopeless are sent to Ca-

nadian towns in care of Jewish societies and are smuggled across the border gradually.

These men had a quantity of letters and credentials signed by various steamship representatives, and I was exceedingly sorry that I could not know whether they were bound on a mission that was much more extensive and nefarious than the plans which they avowed to me.

One fine morning we sighted the Azores and passed close by the shore of St. Michaels, and the second day thereafter we arrived at Gibraltar. Third-class passengers were not encouraged to go ashore, but I made a little arrangement with the man at the plank; and my wife, John Tury, the Lancaster peanut-seller, and I went ashore in the dusk of the evening. The steamer would not leave till after midnight. As we walked along the streets, Tury said to me:

"I suppose if we were going to be here for a day, we might take the train over to London?"

"To London! Why, what do you mean?" I exclaimed.

"Why, I have heard England is a very small place, and it cannot be far from here to London."

Then I realized that he thought Gibraltar was the southern end of England, and I was surprised to learn later how many Italians who have voyaged by Gibraltar more than once are of the same impression. I have heard some argue for it stoutly.

Just the day before we reached Naples, when there was great happiness and rejoicing on every hand, I observed a well-built young Italian with heavy black hair and moustache, a handsome fellow of twenty-five, come up from below with his mandolin. With him was an older man with a guitar. In a few minutes

42 IMPORTED AMERICANS

there was a little band of four musicians gathered on the shady side of the ship at the foot of the companion-way to the hurricane deck. They were playing an American two-step, and had a well-pleased crowd about them. On the lapel of the mandolin-player I observed a button of the Foresters. They had begun on the second number of their impromptu concert, when the second officer piped from the bridge, a deck hand went up and came down in a minute with this mandate:

"You must stop playing; the captain wants to sleep."

Jeers and shouts of scorn and anger rose on every hand, and I observed that the leaders in this expression were those men whom I knew to be American citizens or Italians, Jews or Greeks of some length of residence in the United States.

As the young mandolin-player walked away, I stopped him and spoke to him in English, asking him if he was a Forester. He told me he was and that he belonged to a lodge in Stonington, Conn., and, having been in America five years, was now going home "for the women folks."

In brief, I found in him and his family the ideal group for which we had been looking. He was sufficiently Americanized to appreciate the object of our investigations, and we speedily became good friends.

His name is Antonio Squadrito, and he had with him his father, Giovanni. Five years before, he had left his native Sicilian village, Gualtieri-Sicamino, as one of the first to depart for America from all that country. He had done so because he had his choice between going into the Carabineers, or rural police, and taking up a trade. He had told his father that if he would

help him borrow the money he would go to America. This was done, though the neighbors all prophesied disaster and misfortune "in that strange wild land."

He landed at the Battery from the *Kaiser Friedrich*, being "recommended" to a distant relative from a northern province who was already in New York; and the first work he got was in the quarries of Westerly, R. I., where he worked for three months at \$1.10 per day. He played the mandolin even then with fair skill, and made friends with an Italian who had a barber shop in Stonington. Antonio went there to work, and as he saved his money he sent back, little by little, enough to pay off his debt at home, and the remainder his boss "borrowed" from him. Some domestic relations of the boss caused him to desire to sell out, and one day he came to Antonio and told him he must buy his barber shop or he would not get back the borrowed money. Antonio protested that he could not speak enough English to run the business, but the boss insisted, and in the end Antonio found himself possessed of the shop and a new debt of \$100 which he had got as a loan from a man who had taken an interest in him.

The shop prospered. Antonio sent over for his brother Giuseppe to come over and help him. Giuseppe is older and had married a year before, and his wife Camela had presented him with a pretty little girl baby whom they had named Caterina after her grandmother Squadrito. The next year the shop was doing so well that Carlino, the brother next younger than Antonio, was sent for; and the next year Tommaso, a still younger brother, and Giovanni the father were brought over. The father worked at carpentering and coopering in Stonington, making as much as \$1.80 per day; but he could not learn the language, and

44 IMPORTED AMERICANS

when I met him his English was limited to "All right!" "Fine day!" "Yes, sir!" and "cuss words."

In the last year before our meeting Antonio had married the widow of a whaling-captain of the town, who had been left property by her husband estimated roundly at \$60,000. By this time Antonio had made in his barber shop and cigar store and by furnishing music for dances, etc., \$8,000, and had sent home five or ten dollars each month. A nice little acre or two of garden land had been bought east of the village, and of this Antonio was very proud, as in his country none but the fairly well-to-do owns land.

Now he was going home to get a party of the family, of cousins and neighbors, and he expected to return in two or three months. That suited the limits of our time, and the location of the family in one of the hotbeds of emigration was most pleasing; so we were delighted when he cordially invited us to go home with him. We explained that we wished to make a sort of general study of the country as it related to the immigration question, before we took up the subject in particular, and he confided that his principal reason for wishing to have us visit him in Gualtieri was to show the people there that all the wonderful stories they had been hearing about him were true in the main. He carried no proof except banking papers, and he was anxious about "what the home folks might think." I often think of how much of the strenuous endeavor in all lines in this world is to "impress the home folks." How many men and women have been disappointed when they went out into the world and did something that was absolutely beyond the comprehension—even belief, perhaps—of the simple-minded "folks at home."

The next day, late in the morning, signs began to show in the east that we were nearing the shores of Italy, and late that afternoon the *Lahn* forged into a berth close to the naval sea wall before the beautiful city of Naples.

As we were leaving the ship we saw Carabineers at the gangways arresting several men who had been in the steerage with us. I made inquiry, and was informed that the men arrested had left Italy to avoid military duty, and they had been kept track of. When they sailed home, the Italian authorities in New York had notified the *questor*, or chief of police, at Naples.

As the tender which took us ashore steamed away from the *Lahn*, we got a fine view of the ship and its surroundings. It was encompassed on every hand by bumboat-men selling the sweet fruits of Italy, for which her sons and daughters had hungered and thirsted so long. Just outside of the ring of bumboat-men were the twoscore or more boats of the runners for emigrant lodging-houses. These men would get the eye of a returned emigrant on board and would bargain with him for a room, then take him off with his baggage. A police official in plain clothes who was aboard the tender told me that among the curses of the city are the practices in these lodging-houses, where every sort of evil element congregates to prey on the simple-minded countryman who has been to America for two or three years, toiled hard for the few hundred dollars he is bringing back, and yet has not wit enough to keep the thieves of Naples from getting all or a portion of it. However, the returned emigrants are not to be condemned for their witlessness. I flatter myself that I know a thing or two, and yet I found myself on the constant *qui vive* to keep

46 IMPORTED AMERICANS

from being “done” in Naples, and even my great vigilance did not save me once or twice. Dishonesty is part of the air in Naples, just as is the smell that is famous.

CHAPTER IV

CONDITIONS IN THE NEAPOLITAN ZONE

IT is a painful fact, but the average American's conception of Italian immigration is that the majority of the Italians come from "down in the Boot," and that they are all bad and undesirable. It is the usual thing to regard all southern Italians as unworthy of Americanism. One sees it constantly in public print or finds it in private discourse. And the phrase about the Boot is one which has been bruited around again and again from official report to alarmist editorial, and back to classical reference which was its origin. I have met many people who are not aware that the Sicilians, for instance, do not come from "down in the Boot." These ideas all mate nicely with the one which attributes to every Italian the possession of a stiletto up his sleeve and an ever-ready hand to use it.

The poor southern Italians are the object of constant attack by the American public, of bitter contempt from the more fortunate people of the northern provinces, and of ceaseless worriment from the gentlemen legislators of the kingdom. *Italia Meridionale* is in a miserable condition compared with the north, and the people are ignorant, and the percentage of illiteracy is appalling; but, nevertheless, they are strong in body, steadfast in mind, willing of spirit and at all times thrifty; so that, speaking from an immigratory standpoint, I am convinced, after a survey of the entire experiment, that they are a very good sort of raw

48 IMPORTED AMERICANS

material and their immigration should be encouraged, if the rottenness that corrupts them after they are here—as a drop of poison can turn the blood of an entire body to virus—could be cut out before they start.

Poverty, ignorance and hot blood have fostered among them crime, treachery and immorality, and the larger towns have sufficed to gather these into festering clusters, leaving the countryside comparatively pure. The farmer-folk and the villagers are not criminal, dishonest or vicious; but when, in the process of emigration, nine of them are thrown with that one tenth man who is so, he leads them into ways that are not straight and paths that are turned, and in many, many instances organizes a band which holds a large coterie of families almost entirely in its power. This it can do by superior intelligence, boldness, etc., and the fact that the Italians in America are in a strange land, are "greenhorns," as they say among themselves, lays them wide open to such invidious influences. If that one man or woman out of every ten who is vicious could be prevented from sailing, a few years would see Italian names almost entirely effaced from the criminal news and the court and prison records. If the system of social poisoning of the densely populated immigrant quarters is not destroyed, it will ultimately prove a menace to all law and order in the large cities or industrial districts populous with immigrants.

Before we went to Sicily to study the peculiar conditions surrounding the Squadrito family and their neighbors, we took up the general investigation through the country south of Rome, gathering what we could by going from town to town, asking questions, asking questions, always asking questions.

THE NEAPOLITAN ZONE 49

Much was to be learned from watching even the tiniest things in the newspapers and from observing the people themselves as they passed about the most inconsequential pursuits of their daily existence.

To give the matter a topical consideration, it separates itself naturally into five divisions, which are semi-geographical merely for convenience, as it would be erroneous indeed to consider each province according to its political boundaries: The Zone of Naples, the Zone of Rome, the Provinces of the Heel, the Provinces of the Toe and Sicily. In those portions of the following consideration topicalized as zones, the distinctions are made, because the regions dealt with have all their general social conditions very largely shaped by the subtle cumulative influence of the life in the two great cities, Rome and Naples. It is possible that few Italians are aware of the differences, but they are palpable to an outsider immediately. Every village that is within touch of either the Italian capital or the most important port and city partakes of the markedly contradistinct life of the two. If Naples is correctly called a City of Thieves, then is Rome equally well named a City of Institutions, and there is the difference. Abruzzi, Molise and Puglie (Apulia), having greater extents of plain suited to agriculture than any of the other southern provinces and being farther from the emigration centres on the west side of the peninsula, form a group by themselves under the title Provinces of the Heel. Basilicata (Potenza) and Calabria, being nearly uniformly mountainous even out to the sea line and having the most potent influences at work to urge emigration, are considered under Provinces of the Toe; while, as for conditions in Sicily,

50 IMPORTED AMERICANS

they are best told in connection with our own experiences there with the people of Gualtieri-Sicamino and other towns.

As for general comparative conditions of education, amount of emigration and a very interesting sidelight on the Italian administrative attitude towards emigration, I give a translation of an article which appeared some months since in *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*, of New York, a newspaper of importance, and one which is usually able to reflect the Italian government's position in anything that pertains to social and educational subjects. The article, which is editorial, reads:

"EMIGRATION AND EDUCATION

"The Bureau of Education in Rome has recently received the following telegram from Inspector Adolfo Rossi, who is at present in South Africa.

"'According to the decree already published in the *Official Gazette*, the landing of illiterate immigrants at Cape Town shall be prohibited.'

"South Africa now follows Australia and British Columbia, and before long the United States will emulate their example.

"The law already approved by the House of Representatives is now before the Senate, being favorably reported by the Senate Committee, and from the last message of President Roosevelt (of which the readers of *Il Progresso* are not ignorant) it is evident it will have all the support of the Presidential power. What will then become of our emigration, and particularly that from the southern provinces? This has been a frequent question, and it is now becoming acute. A comparison between the grand total of permanent emigration from the Neapolitan provinces for the first six months of the year, and the percentage of illiteracy shown by the last compulsory enrollment of troops is necessary, in order to comprehend the terrible menace



Peasant Types

STANDARD
LIBRARY

THE NEAPOLITAN ZONE 51

hanging over those regions, and the duties devolving upon the officials directing affairs.

"The following tables give the statistics referred to:

<i>Emigration for Six Months</i>		<i>Illiteracy</i>	
Abruzzi	28,412	49.59	per cent.
Campania	41,066	44.05	" "
Apulia	8,434	53.05	" "
Basilicata	7,840	52.13	" "
Calabria	21,262	55.02	" "

"During the first ten months of 1902 there emigrated from Naples to the United States 145,629, of which number more than eighty-eight per cent were over ten years of age.

"Given the application of the law presented to Congress at Washington by the Hon. Mr. Shattuc, with amendments of the Hon. Mr. Underwood, about 70,000 persons from the Neapolitan provinces alone would have been returned from the American ports during the period mentioned. The following extract is taken from the report of the Senate Committee:

"'While we are spending millions to eradicate from our country the evil of illiteracy, we are opening our doors to illiterate men of all nations. One may have the opinion that education is not a guaranty of character, any more than the want of education may be of dishonesty, but it is undoubted that education constitutes the fundamental basis of any moral and intellectual progress.'

"The last message of the President of the United States contains the following:

"'The second object of an immigration law should be that of ascertaining, by means of an accurate examination and not one simply relative to illiteracy, whether the immigrant has the intellectual capacity of being able to act healthfully and judiciously as an American citizen.'

"In view of such danger, what action remains to be taken? It is illusory to hope that the action of our diplomacy (no matter what eminent statesmen we may have) can succeed in preventing the enactment of

22 IMPORTED AMERICANS

the law in America, any more than it could have prevented such action in Australia, British Columbia or Cape Colony.

We can only endeavor to maintain for as long as possible the openings which we at present have for our emigration, and to endeavor to acquire new ones, as, for instance, the Transvaal mines. A strong economic crisis continues in the Argentine Republic, and at present immigration is necessarily suspended. In Brazil, where there is still much field for opportunities, it would be heartless to encourage our emigrants and afterwards see them in the "fazendas," treated with inhumanity and oppression, without being able to render them any effectual protection.

"On the other hand it is a duty of the Italian state energetically to provide for the education of the southern proletarian masses, which the local administrations cannot do, deprived as they are of resources and oppressed by debts and taxation. In the south it is the duty of the State to conduct, at least in the minor communities, the elementary education, causing the communities to contribute only in accordance with their means, thereby avoiding an unnecessary aggravation of their present condition. As stated by the Honorable Sonnino in his speech in Maddaloni Hall, Naples, modern Italy has so far deplorably failed in the first of its duties to civilization: that of giving primary education to the poor masses of its most unfortunate provinces.

"It is now time to resolve for energetic action, in order to eradicate from one-half the kingdom of Italy the stigma of being the leading nation of Christian Europe in illiteracy. Considerations of prudence as well as humanity advise us to take such a step."

In a word, nearly half of the people are unable to read and write in Italia Meridionale, because the communes are too poor to pay the expenses of maintaining schools except in the larger towns and cities. The attitude of the Italian government is very nicely shown

THE NEAPOLITAN ZONE 53

also. It looks on emigration as the only safety-valve for the districts which are over-populated, and recent years have proved that an immense improvement always follows in any village when the proportion of its emigration rises above ten per cent. The reason is that the Italians in America, South America, South Africa and Australia save enough money to send home enormous sums to their relatives, with the result that in Basilicata, for instance, which has been heavily drained by emigration, there are entire communities in a flourishing condition solely on the savings of their emigrants. By most careful estimates, made by comparison of consular reports with Italo-American banking statements, the Italian money post, and the statistics of the Italian Bureau of Emigration, I have concluded that *in the year 1902 between \$62,000,000 and \$70,000,000 was sent home to Italy from the United States alone. In the year 1903 between \$57,000,000 and \$63,000,000 was the estimated amount.*

The decrease is to be accounted for by the great increase in the number coming over to join those in the United States who had been sending them money. A great difficulty that blocks accuracy in these things is the concealment of funds by returning emigrants and by recipients of money in Italy. I found a family in Caivano, near Naples, for instance, who received through a cousin who returned to Italy on the *Lahn*, at the same time with us, \$3,500, jointly sent by a father and three sons working in the mills in Birmingham, Ala. Only by chance did I learn of it, and then they besought me to keep their secret, fearing that "the King would get it." When the Italian pays his two or three per cent to the government he says, "it has gone to the King." H. J. W. Dam's "The Tax

54 IMPORTED AMERICANS

on Moustaches" very nicely touches up this matter of national taxes in Italy. I know personally of a large number of instances of returning emigrants carrying large sums of money with them, and I have the statements of scores of money-changers to whom American dollars are sold; so that I feel justified in saying that a very large portion of the emigrant savings goes home clandestinely and is never caught in the government net, yet blessed is the lot of the tax-collector in a village which has twenty or more per cent of its native-born in America. His lot is an easy one compared with the corresponding official in a village of small emigration.

Particularly as to conditions in the zone of Neapolitan influence, emigration is the most important feature of life there to-day, for the reason that the emigration from Campania has been and is enormous, and that, should Naples suddenly cease to be the greatest of all ports of embarkation, a financial paralysis would strike the city and province.

Over large districts, the vital arteries of which are the river valleys of the Volturno and Garigliano and the country back from the Gulf of Naples and the Bay of Salerno, the influence of Naples obtains, and its dominant tone, as has been said, is dishonesty. Naturally, since Naples is the metropolis of the region, the Neapolitan point of view is the one emulated, and though I have seen many types of lying, lazy, morally oblique peoples, I have never dwelt among any where a constant exercise of one's vigilance on the defensive was so absolutely necessary.

A rather good story which illustrates the propensities of the Neapolitans was told me by an Englishman whom I met in Caserta. According to his relation, a German Jew, a Scotchman and a Connecticut Yankee

THE NEAPOLITAN ZONE 55

formed a company for the exportation of wine from Naples and went there to set up business. After being in the city several days, and having a few business transactions with the Neapolitans, the Yankee said to his partners:

"Well, boys, we had better settle down and live here for about ten years until we learn a few tricks and then start business, or we had better give these chaps all we have at once and save them the trouble of taking it away from us."

From Frosinone south to the valley of the Sele and back as far as Ariano we found even the simple-minded peasants to have that touch of Neapolitanism, which is, to say the least, an undesirable characteristic. In the city itself it is so serious that not many years since the organized ruffians of the Cammora, recruited from all stations of society, were a power of terror, and since then men more polite, but just as criminal, bankrupted the city and brought general conditions to such a pass that the national government was forced to step in and take control till municipal and provincial affairs could be put on an honest and paying basis. The people are more noisy, more gross in their habits, and more irresponsible in their conduct than any class in any part of Italy. Constant change of government in the past, lack of things of an institutional nature and the focusing of all the bad in the south of Italy may have had the degenerating effect; but, whatever the cause, the effect exists, and the social virus seems to have poisoned many a man I know who, but for his brief stays in Naples, would be a very decent citizen, either in his native town, in other provinces, or in his new home in America. The bad Italians in the United States are in clusters, and the heads of the

56 IMPORTED AMERICANS

majority of these groups are men trained in theft, trickery and crime in the excellent schools of Naples and Palermo.

In the city there are few factories, though the government is bringing every influence to bear to promote industries in Naples, and under the new municipal plan a large tract of the side of the city that lies towards Vesuvius is arranged for factory sites; but there are three important things lacking: raw material, skilled labor and confident capital. Even the excellent street-car system is controlled by Belgians. The north of Italy continues to be the industrial section. The business that emigration engenders is first in importance. Vesuvius, Pompeii, the Bay and the climate form the next important asset, and the exportation of agricultural products and wholesale business of all sorts the third. Two hundred thousand people in the city live on so little a year that the statement of the amount would sound ridiculous.

We traversed the country of the arbitrarily indicated zone in the time of the full harvest, when the bits of plain on which rows of trees, themselves loaded with fruit, were seen to be the supports of miles of running vines bearing great bunches of grapes, heavily covered with dust. In every village were to be seen the hemp workers, where the long stripped stalks were piled up in bound bundles waiting to be laid in the mangling machines, operated as a rule by women and hand-mangled. On carefully brushed stone squares men, women and children were threshing beans and peas. Before every door were flat shallow troughs in which figs or fruit of some sort were drying. On the house-tops the tomatoes were being converted into a dark red mash, which is called *pomidora* and is used to



Mangling Hemp

2020
7/24/20

THE NEAPOLITAN ZONE 57

make the delicious sauces with which macaroni is dressed. Long-horned oxen or patient donkeys, with now and then an undersized horse, drew along the dusty highways carts loaded with casks made ready for wine, bundles of hemp stalks or shocks of wheat. In every village were to be seen the several offices of the steamship companies' sub-agents. The countryside simply teemed with life. There was never a spot where one might stand and, though there was no one in sight, not hear voices all about. In nearly every group of people was to be seen one or more who bore the signs of recent return from America or indications of near departure. Over everything lay the white dust from the dry plains and slopes, and the sun beat down with distracting fervor.

It did not seem to me that in the country districts of the Neapolitan zone the Church exercised quite the influence for good or evil in the material affairs of the people that it does elsewhere in Italia Meridionale, and it was noticeable that the people had stronger commercial instincts, being more inclined to buy and sell if given the opportunity. That finds an expression in America in this way. So many of the lace-workers, barrow-men, coal, wood and ice men are Neapolitans, or are from the villages in the Neapolitan zone. But, in the social organization of the countryside everything led to the impression that, as each child grew up, his or her elders forced a place in the already existing throng for him or her, a place wherein a bit to eat and a scrap to wear might be won, and above that place the child could scarcely hope to rise, inasmuch as it was difficult to maintain the foothold, let alone improve it. Those who were unfit for the struggle became beggars and wanderers, not paupers in the Italian sense, for the Ital-

58 IMPORTED AMERICANS

ian pauper is a person not only penniless, homeless and friendless, but physically incapable of taking any care of himself whatever. The inmates of the Reclusario of Naples are the most shocking lot of human wrecks I have ever beheld aggregated.

If a family or group of families is suddenly deprived of the source from which it has been eking a slender livelihood, the desperation to which it is driven is well instanced by the terrible tragedy at Torre-Annunziata. Immediately on hearing of the first outbreak there, I took up the investigation, and in brief this is the story of the occurrence.

It was merely one of those risings of the common people which occur every now and then, and in which they uniformly get the worst of it. It seems that the estate owned by the Ferroni Corporation had for fifteen years been allowing the farmers about Sarno, Castellamare-Torre-Annunziata, to have cheaply certain waste materials for fertilizing their farms. These were suddenly cut off, and the tenants demanded the immediate delivery of the manure for their common use, but to their demand no attention was paid.

This led to a discontent, which it is claimed was fostered by the local Chamber of Labor, and they were exhorted by a Socialist by the name of Vincenzo Presenzano with the result that on the 31st of August over two hundred of them, armed with sticks, forks, spades and stones, gathered on the property of one Gennaro Salto and stopped the carts coming from the estate with the material, and, the high iron bridge over the River Sarno being close at hand, they dumped the entire outfit into the deeps.

Five municipal guards and two city officials intervened in an endeavor to maintain order; but by this

THE NEAPOLITAN ZONE 59

time the crowd had grown to over five hundred, and, after securing information for making arrests, they retired.

In a little while there arrived a small force of Carabineers, city and municipal guards, and they were so outnumbered by the rioters that the latter attacked them vigorously. The commandant of the municipal guard and one Carabineer fell wounded.

Then the order to fire into the mob was given. It was the claim of the military that the first shots were fired into the air, but men who were in the mob averred that they opened fire even before the commandant was wounded.

Men, women and children withered away before the blazing rifles like so much grass, and, when the mob had dispersed, three lay dead on the grass, two more of the wounded died in a short time, and four were known to be in a very serious condition, while numbers of others were hurt. The exact number did not even come out at the investigation which was ordered by the government.

When I visited the commune it seemed as if a plague had fallen. More soldiers were being hurried to the district and posted in spots to command the situation, arrests were being made, even in houses where the dead lay; but a terrible silence hung over both military and populace. I talked with one of the Carabineers, and he told me he could never forgive himself for helping to shoot down his own people, and that he longed for the day when he could leave the service. It was the second disturbance in which he had been, and in both cases the sufferers were the simple-minded peasantry who, finding themselves deprived of what they regarded as their just rights, had been incited to violence by Socialists.

UN-UNITED AMERICANS

The American people are not united through-
out the country. There is a deep division of
opinion. The people are not united. Some are
in favor of the war, some are not. The people who really
are united are those who are in favor of the war.
I support the war. I support the government.
I support the government. I support the government.
We are united. We are united. We are united.

The American people are not united through-
out the country. There is a deep division of
opinion. The people are not united. Some are
in favor of the war, some are not. The people who really
are united are those who are in favor of the war.
I support the war. I support the government.
I support the government. I support the government.
We are united. We are united. We are united.

CHAPTER V

IN THE ROMAN ZONE

FROM the Sabine Mountains to the sea, south to Frosinone and north to Siena is that section of the peninsula which, it seems to me, is so greatly affected by life and conditions in Rome as to be set off properly as the Roman zone. It includes the greater portion of the provinces of Romagna Lazio, or Latium and Umbria, and the lower portion of Tuscany.

The greatest positive influence in Italy to-day is the Church; the greatest potentiality, the army and the military party; the greatest question, the condition of the peasantry of Italia Meridionale; the greatest danger to the nation as a nation, the bitterness between the people of the great and prosperous provinces of the north and the less favored ones of the south.

As the centre of the world-wide Catholic Church, of the political and military interests of the kingdom, of art, education and literature, modern Rome is a city of institutions, and her citizens are parasites in precisely the same way that a majority of the population of Washington is parasitical. I have not at hand the figures to show which city has the greater proportion of industries, but I think there is little difference.

All through the region are quarries from which are taken the material consumed in the thousands of studios that produce the enormous volume of copies of noted pieces of statuary and the slenderer stream of new creations which pours out of Rome and disperses

62 IMPORTED AMERICANS

to other parts of the Continent, Great Britain and the United States. The amount of art copies bought in Rome by American tourists each season is very large, much larger than is generally known, and forms the most important source of revenue to the people of the Roman zone, aside from the dispersion of government funds, church funds and the compensation for the maintenance of the hosts of tourists and art, musical and theological students. Next in industrial importance to the stone-workers come the operations that pertain to silk and to the making of imitation jewelry, of which latter pursuit Rome is certainly the incomparable centre. Hundreds of shops in Italy display Roman imitations that are nowhere excelled, and thousands of workmen in imitation flowers, jewels, etc., are coming into the United States, establishing themselves in the New World in their old vocations and finding things very prosperous indeed. In the vicinity of the tenement house in which we lived on Houston Street, down West Broadway and elsewhere in New York, are scores of establishments engaged in this very business, and all the workmen are Italians, from the zone of Rome for the most part. All over the United States the industry of designing, cutting and establishing marble and granite pieces of all sorts for cemeteries is rapidly passing into the hands of Italians, and in questioning many of them, in various parts of the country, as to their native provinces, they have replied uniformly, the Roman Campania or Tuscany.

The silk-weavers and hat-makers have centred in New Jersey, and in Newark vie with the Jews, while in Paterson they have the lists more nearly to themselves. In Italy the class of workmen so engaged forms a ready field for the operations of socialistic and anarchis-

IN THE ROMAN ZONE 63

tic agitators; and though the fruit of their labors is rendered comparatively harmless in Italy owing to the vigilance of the police and secret service, in the United States, where there is freedom of speech, the fuller harvest is reaped and the greatest danger exists.

Back of these conditions lies the contempt which these people have come to hold, in the Roman zone, for both Church and State, and the reason is that to them both St. Peter's and the Quirinal and all they represent are things far more ordinary and less impressive than to the populace of the remoter provinces. Political and religious skepticism is growing to be as dangerously common among the poor people in and about Rome as it was in France early last century. Many social conditions are accurately reproduced, and there are wise patriots who dread a repetition in Italy of what followed the 14th of July, 1789, in France.

These things really concern the people of the great northern provinces but little. They are busy and prosperous, educated and advanced, and, though within the boundaries of the same nation, they are very distinctly apart.

I can easily understand the attitude of the common people in the Roman zone toward the aristocracy. The representatives of this class were returning in full force to Rome only about the time we left it, but we had abundant opportunity in both Naples and Rome for getting something near the proper measure of these idling, pleasure-seeking, self-sufficient landholders. Having their position by right of birth, and given every advantage of the European civilization as a result of rent-rolls from huge inherited estates, we found them to be, nevertheless, insolent, shallow, degenerate physically, vicious and so thoroughly unfit as

64 IMPORTED AMERICANS

a class for the responsibilities of the rich and high-placed that, if I had the choice between admitting to the United States a wealthy educated Roman nobleman and a poor Calabrese contract laborer unable to read or write, I should choose the laborer every time.

Though the numbers of the middle class are lamentably small even in Rome, there is a greater and more deplorable paucity farther south. In the agricultural districts a man is either a laboring tenant or a landholder, except for those few who are village artisans, tradesmen, or are in the liberal professions. It requires well-divided ownership of land or diversified industries, as in the United States, to create that sturdy enlightened and independent middle class which is the strength of any nation. The army of returned emigrants are the nearest approach to a middle class to be found in many of the southern communes.

A man should certainly be able, under nearly all circumstances, to find a better use for his pen than in uttering derogatory statements concerning any other man or class of men engaged in the service of God, no matter what their beliefs or his own convictions may be; but the relation of the Italian priests to the millions of emigrants that have come or will come to the United States is of such importance that it would be cowardly not to give an honest expression concerning them. In a general sort of way the poor provinces are referred to, just as is Spain, as "priest-ridden"; but to the average American that is a term of indefiniteness.

The thought of a Catholic cleric always brings to my mind the memory of the Rt. Rev. M. F. Howley, F. R. S. C., the noble and self-sacrificing Bishop of Newfoundland; of Father Tommaso laboring among the



Morning in the Village and Vineyards



2430

2430

poor Italian miners of the Pennsylvania anthracite regions; of priests in frontier missions of the great Canadian Northwest; of priests in the slums of New York, Chicago, Cincinnati, and other cities; of men whom I know, admire, and revere. So, judging the Italian clergy by them and by them alone, I do not believe prejudice of any sort could be charged against what is hereafter said.

Nor is it the Italian clergy as a whole or a major portion that is open to criticism, except as it contributes to the continuance of the oppressive, vitiating system whose acute wrongs are wrought by the minority in the cloth.

Rome, as the centre of the tremendous fabric of the Church, witnesses not only the focussing of the beneficent operations of the Church at large, but of the condemnable workings of the provincial clerics as well. There the true root of the trouble is most nearly laid bare, and it seems strange indeed that something so unworthy should exist under the very walls of the Vatican.

This basic condition is the propensity of indolent young men, sons of impoverished families of quality, sickly youths unfit for more strenuous pursuits, and designing and ambitious students, to turn to the priesthood as affording them the prospect of a lifelong "soft snap." They do this, and are supported in it by their families, without the slightest regard, as a rule, to any truly religious considerations whatever. Italy is greatly overcrowded. Opportunities to rise in life are very few indeed. The man is fortunate who can hold what his father attained. England has suffered and is suffering from the incompetence of those younger sons of good families who have turned to the church, army,

66 IMPORTED AMERICANS

and similar professions. In Italy the diversity of pursuits is still smaller than in England, and the candidates far greater in number, while the examples of Italian priests who have risen to bishoprics, archbishoprics, the cardinal's hat, and even the pontifical chair are so constantly before them, that men who are really fitted by nature and fibre for the priesthood are crowded out to make way for those who are unfit and never become fit. Rome, more than all other cities, sees them in the early stages of their evil progress, and they take on cant, hypocrisy, and prejudice there which, mingled with unscrupulousness, and often with vicious propensities, make them a cloaked harass indeed to the poor people of the parishes in which they are later established.

In the villages of the provinces where the people are poorly educated, the priests have nearly an absolute control of local affairs. I do not mean in any way that pertains to the business of the commune or as to its officials, or the proceedings of law, but the deeper current of life. A newly established school will thrive or fail just as the village priests favor it or inveigh against it. The holidays are the feast days of the patron saints, and it depends upon the priests whether these days are mere occasions for bearing a painted and carved figure of a saint through the streets to be loaded with gifts of money and valuables by the populace, or whether they shall be made occasions of relaxation and communal development to the people. A very great deal of letter-writing is done by the priests for illiterate parishioners, so that much of the correspondence between emigrants in America and relatives at home passes through the priests' hands. Not infrequently priests are money-lenders and take their

usury just as might the veriest Shylock, only that their loan is a "charitable advance to an unfortunate parishioner." An interesting incident of this sort of thing happened at Velletri. An old priest of one of the churches of the town had two brothers for parishioners who desired to emigrate to America. One was named Giuseppe and the other Giacomo. They had barely money enough for one passage, though Giuseppe had a tiny bit of property. Both had borrowed money of the old priest before and paid it back with a high rate of interest. They plotted to get even with him. Giuseppe turned the care of his bit of property over to Giacomo and sailed for America. In a few months Giacomo went to the priest and offered as security for a loan of 300 lire the property which did not belong to him. The old priest took a note of temporary conveyance, installed one of his dependents in the property, gave Giacomo the 300 lire at twenty per cent per annum, and Giacomo went to Naples and sailed for New York. At the end of two years the old priest was beginning to consider the property already his, when Giuseppe came home on a visit, proved that his brother had no right to offer the property as security, and forced the priest to pay rent for it for two years. Giacomo was of course safe from harm in America. Giuseppe sold the property and returned, and is now in partnership with his brother in a little business on Vine Street, Cincinnati.

In an effort to maintain in the eyes of their parishioners their own outward show of virtue, priests whose lives have vicious tendencies often commit crimes that are worse than murder. The attitude of the Church toward an adulteress is a matter of common knowledge. When it is said that the judging of the

68 IMPORTED AMERICANS

women of their parish is left in the hands of the priests, and that in small communities a woman disgraced by such judgment has no opportunity of hiding it from her neighbors, the terrible power of the *padre* can be seen. There is scarcely a community which has not its pathetic story; some have many, and I have heard more than one told in brief whispers as the poor woman who was the object of it passed by. Yet, though convinced of her innocence, her neighbors do not dare take up her cause, for fear of bringing on their own heads what has fallen on her.

A son of a well-to-do oil and wine merchant in a certain village was a patron of the priest in charge at the principal church of the town. He was in love with the daughter of the man who sold the salt and tobacco for the government. She refused his attentions, and, though there had never been a whisper of blame against her, one Sunday she found that the priest had directed against her the power of the Church. She bravely faced the conditions, stepped quietly into her new status in village life, and since then has been living such a life of self-sacrifice and nobility that her very deeds have daily given the lie to the charge against her. Since then the son of the oil merchant has ruined his father and fled to Australia, and the priest died a miserable death in a *torrente* into which he stumbled while drunk; but to her is for ever denied everything most dear to a woman.

Not so with many other women who come under the ban: though equally innocent, though victims of spite, of distorted circumstances, they fail to support the blow and *do* become abandoned. The natural current is toward the cities, where they may hide from all who ever knew them in the village.

IN THE ROMAN ZONE 69

It must not be forgotten that this system has been going on in a greater or less degree for centuries, and it has forced the natural attitude of the fathers, husbands, and brothers of the women into one of the utmost watchfulness and jealousy. I have often heard philanthropically inclined Americans who went into the Italian quarters seeking to do good, complain that the men were exceedingly averse to allowing their wives or daughters to meet strangers, or to have any of the usual liberties of American women. This jealousy is traditional, and is the result of the system outlined above.

Another point on which this system may have some bearing is the devotion of the Italian women to the Church compared with the indifference of the men. In most civilized countries the women are more inclined to be religious than the men, but in Italy this is accentuated, and the separation is growing, as the skepticism to which I have referred spreads.

All over southern Italy one hears a bitter reference to the *decime*, the one-tenth of a man's money which is claimed by the Church each year; and though this often works out as not a literal allotment of one-tenth, there are many parishes, where the principal priests are keen business men, that more than one-tenth is extracted, and the tithes take form in labor, vegetables, wine, fruit, fees, etc., but are nevertheless valuable.

It is not a matter of economics and does not pertain to this consideration, if the peasantry of southern Italy are such good Christians as to give to the use of God one-tenth of their all; but it certainly comes within the scope of this study when that enormous fund goes to support that portion of the priesthood

72 IMPORTED AMERICANS

<i>Year</i>	<i>Immigrants Arrived</i>	<i>Average Daily Wage in U. S.</i>
1891	489,407	\$1.00.
1892	579,663	1.00.30
1893	439,730	.99.32
1894	285,631	.98.06
1895	258,536	.97.88
1896	343,267	.97.93
1897	230,832	.98.96
1898	229,299	.98.79
1899	311,715	1.01.54
1900	448,572	1.03.43
1901	487,918	1.05.62
1902	648,743	1.04.93
1903	857,046	1.03.89

It will appear that there are other and less understood influences at work, to cause the swelling or diminishing of the flood of immigrants, than the wage rate in the country. In a previous chapter I have noted the bearing of the prospect of more stringent immigrant legislation on the flood of 1903, and in the section of the country now under discussion we found abundant evidences of the effects of the news spread far and wide that people who did not get into the United States soon would find it more difficult than ever to get in.

Many, many families on the Apulian plain, who had been doing very well so far, were preparing to depart for the United States just as soon as the harvest season was over. They had been intending to go to the United States for some years, but had put it off, fearing to disturb a condition that was well enough, but nevertheless being fully decided, sooner or later, to go to the United States. The prospect of a law excluding illiterates precipitated them. Many of these same fam-



Threshing Beans

IN THE HEEL AND TOE 73

ilies are already in this country, having left their homes since we visited them.

There is something that is insistently Greek about the people of the Heel, and they more nearly approach the Oriental than any others of the Italian provincials. I do not think they have quite the passionate natures of the Sicilians or the ruggedness of the mountain Calabrese, nor are they as energetic as their fleas, which are certainly the liveliest I have ever encountered.

To the casual observer they seem to be lazy, and their habitations present a certain neglected appearance that is strongly contrasted with those houses in each town which have been rehabilitated with money sent home from America. But the people are not lazy. They are merely bound by traditional methods of doing things, and by an unconquerable sub-malarial condition. In many spots one will see large plantations of *Eucalyptus globulus* planted to counteract malaria.

There is an odd theory, of interest only because of its oddity, that the famous Apulian fevers are the results of the dissolution of the numbers of men fallen in battles which have taken place on Apulian soil. A little computation and historical reference shows millions of men to have fallen in the Heel, and when the armies of the Crusaders camped about Brindisi they were nearly wiped out by death from sickness. Ever since that time fevers have prevailed, and there are some spots that are certain death to any foreigner should he sleep there over night.

Large quantities of cotton are grown in this region, and when one is travelling south it will be noticed that shortly after the groves of hazelnuts, beeches, and chestnuts cease, the first plantations of cotton will be-

74 IMPORTED AMERICANS

gin to appear. The plain of Cannæ roughly marks the limit of the cotton country. Around the Gulf of Taranto there will be seen large fields of cotton and saffron, and though the country is very fertile and densely populated, the agricultural system is very bad, and the ground inefficiently cultivated merely because it is a centuries-old custom to let the ground lie fallow for two years after each crop.

Olive orchards flourish, and nearly every considerable town is a centre of salad-oil manufacture. Oranges are grown in abundance, but cannot compete with the Sicilian for export. The Apulian wine is very fine, being much softer than the Sicilian, yet not as popular as the wines of Capri and the Vesuvius region.

About Cotrone the finest licorice in the world is produced, and in many spots there will be seen clusters of date palms, though the fruit does not mature as fully as it should.

Much of the wood required for artificial purposes in southern Italy comes from western Apulia, Potenza and Calabria. Fine oaks, beeches, chestnuts, etc., grown on the mountains, and the Sila chain, whose highest peak is snow-covered, are well clad with pines which afford what the Italian carpenter calls *legno bianco* (white wood).

Aside from agriculture, some of the few industries are wood-cutting, taxed unbearably by the government, sulphur-mining at Eboli, salt-mining about Lungro, honey-producing about Taranto, fish-catching and exporting from the same town, velvet and silk producing in and about Catanzaro, and sheep and goat herding in the Sila chain. The agricultural products are the mainstay of the people, who are so densely packed in some communities that if it were not for the *Cactus*

IN THE HEEL AND TOE 75

opuntia, which is grown in hedges in place of fences, there would be scarcely enough to eat.

The town of Taranto, which is built on a rock cut off from the land by a 239-feet-wide canal, which will allow the passage of any battle-ship in the Italian navy, is possibly the most densely inhabited spot on the earth. Sixty thousand people live there in a space so small that New York's most thickly populated tenement districts do not compare with it. An odd thing is noticeable in this town, especially among the fishermen of the Mare Piccolo. The Italian is generously tinged with Greek, and among the totally illiterate the jargon is absolutely unintelligible to an outsider.

Around the Heel nearly all the settlements are well back from the coast, and strange to say the reason is, not that it is healthier or more convenient, but that in the Middle Ages they were established there because it was not safe to live alongshore. Since then no one has thought of changing; in fact the entire region, except as it has been stirred by the letters of emigrants and the doctrines of Socialists and Anarchists, seems to live by the precept, "What is, is best."

Something of the deep establishment of customs and of the religious state of the country can be gathered from the following. In Bari there is the Church of San Nicola, than whom there is no more revered saint in all Italia Meridionale, wherefore note the number of Nicolas. In the crypt his remains are supposed to be encased in a tomb from which exudes on and about the 8th of May an oily substance that is miraculous. Pilgrims come for the feast of the 8th of May by thousands and thousands, and nearly all of them are in the costume of the remoter villages. On the promontory at Cotrone stands a pillar which marks the site of the temple of

76 IMPORTED AMERICANS

Hera, once the goddess of all the peoples about the Gulf of Taranto, but now it has for a neighbor the Church of the Madonna del Capo, and each Saturday young girls from the region about go in procession to the church in their bare feet, all clad in white.

The people in many of the towns are primitive, especially in the Basilicatan Mountains, where strangers are often as unwelcome as they are to-day among the mountaineers of East Tennessee. Some few families control nearly all the tillable land, and exact from the poor peasants one-half of all they produce on it for rent. To the American farmer who has been long accustomed to raising a crop on shares, that does not sound very bad, but the *latifondo*, as this system is called, is one of the curses of Italia Meridionale to-day, and in that portion of this narrative which deals with our studies in Sicily, where the same condition prevails as in Apulia, Basilicata, and Calabria, I shall give more definite expression on the system. One of the very powerful families in this region is the Baracco family, and they literally hold in their hands the fate of a vast region.

Not only is the country very primitive in spots, but in some it is exceedingly wild. About Mount Vulture, and especially in the great half-destroyed lateral crater, the forests are so dense as to be almost impenetrable, and wolves and wild boars are numerous.

Leaving entirely the consideration of the regions of the Heel, and speaking only of Basilicata and Calabria, which have been pouring emigrants into the United States, there should be mentioned the great enemy of the peasant, which has driven more men to America than any other thing, the terrible *torrente*.

It is merely a mountain stream, totally dry in the

IN THE HEEL AND TOE · 77

summer time, as what little water might course down it is carried along in clay-lined irrigating ditches, and distributed along the face of the hills sometimes hundreds of feet above the level of the river-bed, so cleverly are some of the canals constructed. But, in the rainy season, when enormous quantities of water are precipitated every day on the mountain sides, the *torrente* becomes a devilish agent of destruction, and its waters devastate whole communes in a few hours.

These districts have struggled to wall in with masonry and concrete the whole course of the stream, and to clear the bed of all obstructions which would prevent the current having a straight, easy plunge to the sea, but the water is perverse, and it is not unusual for the best-curbed *torrentes* to rip out their walls and ruin in a night the labor of twenty years. Taxes and volunteer labor to repair communal works, and expenditures and labors to patch up private estates, have so impoverished the people that in many places they have been forced to abandon, not only any attempt to curb the *torrente*, but to maintain any department of the communal government that costs as much as a penny. The general taxes went unpaid, and when the government forced sales of houses and gardens, the people simply abandoned their places and became wanderers or emigrated to America. At the present time nearly all of the villages are in a condition that is much improved. Money sent home from America is doing it. But the *torrentes* are just as bad as ever, and so long as they keep the people impoverished there will be no money to pay for the maintenance of schools.

Sicily has a slight advantage in the formation of the country, but there the *torrente* is still the object of constant vigilance and does much damage. People

78 IMPORTED AMERICANS

of intelligence are fully aroused to conditions in Italia Meridionale, and a very excellent expression of the provincial attitude was given in an article by Signor Enzo Saffiotti, which appeared in the *Gazetta di Messina della Calabria* on the 15th of September, 1903. It is given below:

THE SOUTHERN QUESTION CONFRONTS THE COUNTRY.

Congressional resolutions and government promises. The burden on the Southern press. Great discontent among the people. Résumé of the past thirty years of conditions. Riots in 1893. Agrarian and mining crises. The Church's tenths, the great landed estates renting system and the confiscated demesneal properties. Heavy usuries and peasants' land contracts. Economic-social revival. Appeal to Southern deputies. Restoration's era.

We must not grow weary of repeating it!

One of the most urgent and yet most difficult problems which the government and parliament have been called upon and are obliged and bound promptly to solve in the present course of our national life is the question of the condition of southern Italy. In order that such a mighty and intricate matter may be properly adjusted, verily must it be known to its every limit and studied through its every cause.

It is the task of the press, and particularly of the Southern press, to associate its endeavors with noble and unselfish intention, to direct with exactitude the current of public sentiment in the country, so that it shall force the government to efficacious measures and precautions. These may be obtained through some financial sacrifice and reduction of useless expenditures in the state budgets.

The state cannot entrench itself behind financial difficulties when a question that is not regional arises, for there are those to devise ways out of the difficulty.

The deficit of many millions could in no manner continue to enfeeble the state budget if a preference

IN THE HEEL AND TOE 79

were given to the productive works, and the national economic conditions would certainly be revived.

In parliamentary sessions, debates on the Southern question have at all times been closed with vague votes and presidential assurances, the latter filled with so many pretty promises for the improvement of these our generous and forgotten regions.

They are promises which will doubtless continue to remain unfulfilled, just as the preceding mass of assurances delivered by administrations, leaders, and ministers. Meantime the South is waiting and will continue to wait for those prompt reforms and vigorous measures which would assist greatly in raising the economic status, and for the future disclose a horizon bright and clear. It is anxious to be lifted from that condition of humbled inferiority into which the guilty carelessness of its rulers have thrust it.

Just a little has been done, comparatively nothing, directly to the advantage of our population, harassed as it has been by the different forms of commercial and industrial crises and vexed with all kinds of local and fiscal taxes, yet they ever know how to keep high and unchanging the unitarian sentiment of the nation.

The cause of recurrent convulsions of agitation among the working class and the slender middle class is not entirely to be attributed to the propagation of socialistic doctrines, as the government is so ready to explain it. It is all a leaven of discontent working within the population, a realization of the isolation in which they are left, of the deprivation of the rightful help and support from the government which with provident laws and measures should defend their interests, and further encourage and protect their industrial undertakings.

The various ministers, during the last thirty years of Italian political life, have done nothing that was remarkable for these Southern regions, whose economic conditions, though troublesome in the beginning, have gradually grown worse.

As a matter of fact, the recurrence of those social phenomena have given people at a distance who were

80 IMPORTED AMERICANS

inclined to turn their observation and consideration on our affairs, a different impression from that which would be gathered if the inward causes were otherwise studied, and this attests in a very considerable way the moral sentiment of our people, who, though of great sensitiveness and resentful of wrong, quietly sustain the additional adversity of being misunderstood, even when instinctively rebellious to all forms of oppressive authority.

On the day after the conflict in 1893, when the administration of that day set on foot measures to favor the Southern provinces, which should eventually alleviate the severe hardships of our condition, the universal discontent began to disappear rapidly.

The resumption of quiet was not the result of the presence of bayonets and the pronouncing of exemplary sentences from temporary tribunals, for our people fear neither, but came about through the administration's pledging itself to help the population and hurriedly presenting to parliament new and old schemes for relief. Owing to political changes, these remained merely in their former status, that of schemes. Our people, mindful of the past, realize in the new promises of the government nothing but a quantity of pious lies, destined to deceive or satisfy, if for no other reason, with their beautiful sound and appearance. So pretences and claims on behalf of these promises are merely like bad drafts of short date, and even had the government fulfilled them it would not have been generosity, but apportioned justice.

The hardships of southern Italy—those of Sicily are common with those of the other regions—are of an economical nature, and arise from complex causes, in which are competing factors, but antique and recent, permanent and transitory, and thus inducing excessive taxes divided unjustly, agrarian and mining crises, lack of needed public works, not of merely electoral nature, but of a most necessary sort, the insufficiency of roads to connect districts, and the disproportionate rates of the railroads for freight and transportation.

IN THE HEEL AND TOE 81

The first step toward a gradual reduction of these oppressive tariffs, after so many years in which there has been so much complaint, has at least been achieved in a very cautious way by the first ordinance of Minister Palenzo, which went into effect with good results at the beginning of the present month. It is to be hoped that our legislators will uphold it with additional and greater reductions.

There still remain unsolved some other notable questions, among which are the annual tithes of one-tenth taken by the Church, the system of renting piecemeal large properties on oppressive leases to the peasants, and others, all waiting these many years to be adjusted and regulated by a wise legislation. Also from the distribution and opening up for cultivation of the great demesne estates (Church property confiscated by the governments a quarter of a century ago), Sicily and the other southern provinces could extract great benefit and profit.

The provincial evils will increase gradually, but powerfully, if radical reforms are not introduced and carried out in the matter of the existing agrarian régime, in which pauper peasants, on account of their miserable condition, are making themselves greater burden-bearers under onerous and usurious contracts, thus prostituting their industry to usury and impeding all agricultural progress.

Meanwhile the population is increasing so rapidly that the products of the soil are become insufficient for their very necessities. Prompt aid to agriculture, which is the important resource of southern Italy, is needed if the Meridionale population hope to derive any increase in benefit or profit. Only with a readjustment of the agricultural régime and the leasing of country properties may we hope for a true and healthy social revival. With the renewal of parliamentary procedures it is to be hoped that the government will seriously undertake the Southern Italian question.

Our deputations—they who should be examples of harmony and tenacity—instead of being objects of daily criticism, should join compactly together, with-

82 IMPORTED AMERICANS

out making disrupting questions of party, race, or political gradation, and demand and obtain those reforms waited for so long.

They should have a sole intention, a single aim: to redeem the provinces of southern Italy from the straits in which they lie so cruelly oppressed. Returning to Montecitorio's halls they should not evade their principal duty. Discussions about this matter there have been in plenty, until now we demand action; on behalf of the dignity and prestige of the entire nation, the solution of the Southern Italian problem is clearly imposed upon them. The legislative body has already announced its position of being willing, and facing its promises it cannot honorably fail.

After so many depreciations too often inspired by misconceptions, after so many accusations, discredits, and imputations treacherously cast on our patriotic population, there might come suddenly an era of reparation—it might come at once!

The South is waiting!

ENZO SAFIOTTI.

This, though comprehensive and with more than one carefully veiled threat in the lines, is only one of the many strong articles appearing in the southern papers, and it is among the mildest. When the situation is reviewed, I believe it not ill considered to say that Italy owes her immunity from a great rebellion in the south to the relief afforded by emigration and emigrant savings.



Scilla—Draught-oxen of Italy

CHAPTER VII

GUALTIERI-SICAMINO AND THE SQUADRITO FAMILY

IT was a rare morning when we got out of our ill-smelling second-class compartment at Reggio di Calabrie, and strolled down in the bright sunlight to the steamer lying at the makeshift dock ready to ferry passengers over to Messina.

We were bound at last for the mountain village of Gualtieri-Sicamino; where lived Antonio Squadrito's family, and as we contemplated the island across the straits it seemed that they must live in a very Elysium indeed.

A cool wind swept down from the north, barely ruffling the wonderfully colored water of the six-mile-wide channel; English colliers were ploughing up "light" from the south; scores of boats fishing for sardines were in sight; directly opposite was Messina, with its sickle-shaped arm that protects its harbor; and against the abrupt purple hills the creamy white houses of the town piled themselves up for more than a hundred feet in places. In the grand distance to the south lay the huge shape of Mount *Ætna*, the crater appearing like a bite out of the skyline.

As the steamer neared the shore, we could see that to the south of the city extended miles of fruit orchards very thickly set, and to the north an excellent road ran out to the Point of Faro, where rose the light that marks the entrance to the Straits of Messina.

As we entered the harbor, steaming in close by the

[illegible]

The streets were the same old old general character I have mentioned before. The street that we traveled on to the hotel was the Avenue, there seemed to be a great deal of people in motion and activity than over any other street in the city. The streets were very clean. The people walked almost as rapidly as in London. The great numbers of Nurses and Nurses' homes, business houses seemed to be the main part for business houses only. On the main street some American embassies were visible.—
The first day of the conference where I knew Mr. Lewis M. Laughlin of Baltimore to preside, and the hotel was the Washington Hotel decorated with huge white and blue American flag.

I learned later that the two wine-shops where they really can get out a good dry cocktail and a standard gin they are owned, one by a father and the other by his son. The father emigrated to New York about the time of the Civil War, and according to reports boasts of having jumped the bounty three times, and succeeded a fortune in the saloon business in New York. The son is also keeping bar, because it is the only

GUALTIERI-SICAMINO 85

thing he knows how to do, and is waiting for his father to die, when I fancy there will be one less American flag on the water front of Messina. Both father and son are American citizens, and are much in demand with the emigrants; and from all I could gather they and their operations could be very well dispensed with.

We stopped in Messina only long enough to get fed, freshened, and in some small degree rehabilitated, and then took train for Gualtieri-Sicamino, intending to use that place as a base of observations in Sicily.

Having heard from Italians of the north that the people of southern Italy were for the most part low-browed swine, and having found the people in the Boot to be decent, kind-hearted and hard-working, though ignorant and poor, we were prepared to doubt the Sicilians to be the bloodthirsty, stiletto-using banditti, such as they are popularly supposed to typify. It was a real gratification to find the first representatives we met to be of a thoroughly desirable type *considered from the standpoint of good raw material for a great growing nation.*

Nor did we have occasion thereafter to change our first estimates.

As our train roared through the tunnels and toiled around the bold faces of the mountains the greater portion of that mid-afternoon, we were talking anxiously of what Gualtieri must be like, for it was set down in the books as a town of 5,000 people, and we feared that it would be much too large a community to yield the typical country family such as we had found made up the great mass of Italian emigrants. Soon we left the heights and the narrow defiles, and came down to the sea in plain view of the island vol-

86 IMPORTED AMERICANS

cano Stromboli, belching great volumes of vapor into the azure dome, and finally pulled up at Santa Lucia, bracketed in the time-table as the station of the town of Gualtieri. When we stepped out of the compartment the only building near at hand was the square, squat, stuccoed station, while a few houses straggled away in the distance. We were for climbing aboard again, but the guards were calling "Santa Lucia-Gualtieri-Sicamino, Pagia, San Filippo," and even as we hesitated the *capo* blew his horn and the train crawled away towards Milazzo, in view on the far blue cape, and left us standing there.

To the north was the blue-green sea close at hand, to the east and west the bold knees of the mountains coming out to the water line, to the south the hills piled one on another, broken by twisting valleys. In the late afternoon sunlight, falling athwart the inland slopes, I could see how they were terraced like gardens in order to allow them to be cultivated and the terraces ran up to great heights. Certainly there was nothing about us to make us think we had come to a too city-like community for our experiment. Many, many miles away on heights we could see some white houses in clustering villages, but if there was a town of five thousand people lying about somewhere it was rather artfully concealed.

As I surrendered our tickets to the *capo di stazione* I said:—

"Is this the station for Gualtieri-Sicamino?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, where is the town?"

"You go along this road."

He pointed to a narrow wagon road running along the tracks for a short distance, then winding into the

heart of the hills. It was two inches deep with dust, and the sun beat down on it with great fervor. In addition to our being encumbered with the heavy camera, and one carefully packed valise, I realized that it was about 110° Fahrenheit on that bit of the king's highway.

"How far is it to the town?"

"Eleven kilometers, sir." (Seven miles and more!)

"I—I—suppose I can hire a carriage hereabouts," I said,—a little faintly, I fear.

"No, there is no cart around here now."

"How about a donkey or two?"

The station-master swept the surrounding country with hand-shaded eyes and shook his head deprecatingly.

"No, all that I can see are carrying loads of grapes."

Seven miles' tramp in that dust and sun with our luggage, which contained photographic things too precious to leave out of our sight!

Half a mile from the station we passed three women going along in a sort of dog-trot with great baskets of figs, just picked, on their heads, a rolled-up bit of cloth between head and basket.

"I think I have the point of view of *those* women," said my wife's voice from the pillar of dust that surrounded and hid her as the salt did Mrs. Lot.

In a short time a farmer who had been on our train overtook us. He was carrying a heavy sack of things the neighbors had commissioned him to buy in Messina, and in one hand he bore two salt cod, still dripping with brine. Later I learned that salt fish are a delicacy in Sicily and that the south of Europe is one of the best markets for Gloucester fishermen. My imperfect Italian caught his ear at once, and when he

88 IMPORTED AMERICANS

learned that my native tongue was English he demanded eagerly whether I had been in America or not; and when I answered in the affirmative he said I must excuse him, but were we not the friends that rich young Antonio Squadrito was expecting? Reluctantly enough I said we were, for my parting words with young Squadrito on leaving the *Lahn* were that he should keep our coming quiet and say nothing as to our nationality. There was very little now in our appearance or conduct to show we were Americans, and all through our travels we took refuge in the wide disparity of North of Italy dialects from the Sicilian, and those persons who did not think us Milanese or Turinese knew we must be French or Spanish—except in Gualtieri. There Antonio had let the cat out of the bag. As a result the whole town had been in a state of exalted expectancy for weeks. The people had a *carrela*, one of the open, springless mule carts, trimmed and decorated ready to be sent to meet us, and in fact our arrival was to be a public festival, but there was one slip—I had not sent Antonio a letter or telegram, and so we plodded on in the dust unmet and unwelcomed.

The farmer announced himself as our friend and said he would guide us straight to the Squadrito house, for he had a cousin in America, close to New York,—in Cincinnati in fact,—and, with the blessing of the Holy Mother, if his wife ever got well enough, he was going there too, taking her and the family.

We might have been a traveling circus or an army with banners. Of every five people we met, two at least turned to escort us back to the town, while the news of our arrival was shouted to the inmates of every house we passed and to the hundreds of men,

GUALTIERI-SICAMINO 89

women and children who were toiling in the fields. We overtook a flock of sheep being driven two miles to water, and soon we formed the van of the most picturesque cavalcade imaginable — men, women, sheep, babies, donkeys and goats. At a distance the country looked sparsely settled. Close at hand we found that it veritably swarmed with life, for the average population is 2,500 souls to the square mile.

The hills shut out the sun; a cool breeze sprang up; the boys gathered fresh figs for us from the wayside trees, grapes from vineyards as we passed, blackberries from bush-grown stone-heaps, apples, pears, plums and *Ficus indicus*, the thorn-covered, mango-shaped golden-yellow fruit which grows on the edge of the thick leaves of the cactus hedges of Sicily, and forms a very important and staple article of food with the poor. There is a Sicilian proverb which says: "No matter how dire the misfortune, there are fico-d'indias."

Finally, as we turned a sharp corner in the road, we beheld the town, lit by the last rays of the sun filtering through a defile in the hills; and, weary, hot and dusty as we were, something akin to relief and soothing satisfaction stole over us as we saw that it and the country about was typical of all we had seen in the other provinces of southern Italy.

Gualtieri-Sicamino is a mass of stone-built, plaster-covered houses with a uniformity of architecture which hardly allows one to distinguish public buildings, stores or churches from private houses, and the whole is piled up against the face of a lofty hill. Nearly all villages in southern Italy are on the hilltops or the hill slopes, so that, as a Roman wrote nearly two thousand years ago, "the land that can be cultivated with ease

90 IMPORTED AMERICANS

should not be cumbered with habitations." The general plan was identical with that of dozens of other villages we had visited: a street or two circling the base of the hill, one or two tiny squares, bare as new-laid eggs, then a succession of zigzag ways towards the top of the hill: ways,—they are not streets, because in some places they are not more than three feet wide, and one third of the way the ascent is so sharp that stone steps are used. The village is much as it was eight hundred years ago. Below its edge is the 200-foot ribbon of sand and shale, strongly walled in along its whole length from the sea to the heart of the mountains, the then dry *torrente*, or river bed.

Below us lay Gualtieri, with its white walls and dark tiled roofs, a rose-haze over it from the sinking sun, embowered in the clustering hills dark green with vineyards, olive and lemon orchards, the white belt of the *torrente* below and radiating ribbon footpaths along which came pannier-laden donkeys; little flocks of milk-goats; stoop-shouldered men bearing their long-bladed hoes and spear-shaped spades; erect women with brilliant-colored skirts, scarfs or kerchiefs, water-jars, baskets, panniers or bundles on their heads.

Our little procession wound down to the bridge, which looked almost Syracusan, it is so old, and across into the "square," on one side of which is the principal church, and on the other the municipal offices. The description sounds well enough; but the church is a low, squat building with a small tower in which reposes a cracked bell and a noisy clock, while the "municipal offices" are two rooms on the second floor of a merchant's combined store and home; the square is possibly sixty by one hundred feet, the largest open space in the community. In all the town



The Messenger—The Guide—The House of the Squad-
ritos—The Town (Gualtieri)

2450

7542

1

GUALTIERI-SICAMINO 91

there is not a street over twelve feet broad, and some would measure four or three. As we wound out of the square into one of these narrow ways and heard voices proclaiming on every hand that "Antonio's Americans" had arrived, all fears that Gualtieri was too urban, and not a true type of the rural districts which send the emigrants, forever vanished from our minds.

Suddenly, in the narrowest part of the way in which we were, I saw over the door of a small hole-like room in the wall:

BOTTEGA DI NICOLA SQUADRITO,

and, seeing two boys at work with a small anvil and hand-drill, knew that this was the blacksmith shop of Antonio's younger brother. Two doors beyond, a kindly old face appeared at the door an instant, our procession set up a shout, and something told me this was Antonio's mother. We were ushered into a large, cool, windowless room with a red-tiled floor and bare, white walls, along which were rows and rows of hand-made rush-bottomed chairs. There must have been forty of them, and it seemed to augur well for the size of the family; but we learned later that the chairs stood there ready for the throng of neighbors who came nightly to hear Antonio tell of the marvels of America and to laugh over his prodigious yarns of buildings twenty stories high. Nightly they would shake their heads and laugh, and then Antonio would say: "Just wait till my American friends come, and you can ask *them*."

Poor Mrs. Squadrito was almost beside herself.

92 IMPORTED AMERICANS

Our sudden descent upon her, the absence of all other members of the family in the vineyard east of town, the highly excited crowd which was pushing its way into the doors behind us, were too much for her, and she hastened to show us into an upper room—Antonio's room, we could see at a glance—and to bar out the crowd.

In ten seconds she had brought a flask of fine old Marsala, in thirty more a plate of sugared cakes, in fifty a heaping basket of several sorts of grapes, fresh figs, pears, apples, etc., and it was with difficulty she could be restrained from bringing more. Swift-footed small boys had sped to bring Antonio and others of the family. Their number is so large that, unless the individuals are properly identified the reader may get them confused.

At this point in the narrative Antonio and his father, being home on a visit, are to be subtracted from the portion in America. Giuseppe, twenty-nine years of age, Carlino, twenty-two, and Tomasino, fourteen, are in charge of the barber shop in Stonington. The total is father and mother, ten children, one daughter-in-law and one grandchild; and the nine in Italy, besides Antonio and his father, are as follows:

Giovanina, the oldest daughter, is twenty-eight, and a lovable girl. For some years she was rather frail, and her marriage with her soldier lover was deferred. He decided to stay in the army for another term, and he has been in the service fourteen years. In one year more he is to be discharged with a life pension, and Giovanina thinks that then the long, romantic dream of her life will come true. I have often looked at her face, sweet by reason of the soul that shines through its mask of flesh already beginning to fade, and have

wondered if there was not a great disappointment awaiting her at the crest of the hill.

Next in the family comes Maria, a bright-eyed girl of twenty-three, wild with eagerness to go to America.

Carlino, I have said, is already in America, and next younger than he is Nicola, the blacksmith, with a shop in which he does really wonderful things with his hands. One day, for instance, he made a trunk lock with four tumblers, all parts from raw metal, which was truly a marvel of handicraft.

Vincenzo is a half-grown boy, merry, tuneful and irresponsible. Giovanni, Jr., and Tono are ten, eight and six years of age respectively, and are boys of the most thoroughly boyish type, only that they have early learned the great lesson of southern Italy that "he who eats must toil."

The most interesting character of all is the mother, now fifty-four years of age, a woman of most kindly heart. Her hands are gnarled and knotted with toil. In her ears are heavy gold earrings with antique coral centres. Once they belonged to her grandmother, and some day they will descend to Caterina, her first granddaughter, the child of Giuseppe and his wife Camela. The wife, who is a plain, hearty woman, can scarcely wait for the day when she reaches New York. Tears of joy rise in her eyes at the very mention of her husband's name. Little Caterina, or Ina, is but five, and is the pet of all.

But here the family and half the neighborhood come trooping up the stairs, escorting Antonio, who, since his arrival, had been treated like a king, and now he welcomed us royally and we were dragged into a perfect maelstrom of introductions to cousins and friends,

IMPORTED AMERICANS

to emerge a rule confused as to relationships and names.

When we had removed some of the grime of our tramp and displayed the mysteries of our kodak to the throng, which could not contain its impatience concerning the black box and rolls of films, we were taken on a twilight walk in the little plot of vineyard ground which Antonio had bought three years before, east of the town.

The ostensible object of the walk was to show the town to us, but the real one, as we soon understood, was to show us to the town. My wife walked with Antonio and his father; Carmelo Merlino, the shoemaker and steamship agent, took my arm, and the people who could crowd into the narrow street, formed a procession behind us.

From that time on we lived in procession. Whatever we did, big or little, was done in procession. Did I desire to take a photograph of the town in the late afternoon from the hill opposite, five hundred inhabitants came to my help. If my wife went to the public laundry with the women, you would have thought the festival of the patron saint of laundries was in celebration. Did I go forth to the fields with the men at dawn, there was a centurion's host to witness.

On our return from the garden it was after six o'clock, perhaps near seven, and we found many people waiting to see us, and in the next half hour the neighborhood called. Family after family poured in, all dressed in Sunday attire, and as we sat in the large second-floor room of the Squadritos' house the entire apartment was thronged to suffocation, while in the street outside there were people enough to fill a circus tent.

We had had an abundance of fruit, but were not averse to a little dinner, yet none appeared to be forthcoming. Unsubstantial as it was to us, all that we had to say was meat and drink to the people. Rapt in excitement they stood listening to the stories of the land of their heart's desire, and no thought of food disturbed them. At seven o'clock my wife had told all that could be told of dresses, manners and customs in America. At eight o'clock I concluded an impromptu lecture on the topic of American liberty; still no dinner. At nine o'clock my wife had answered the last of the questions on the cost of groceries, rent and clothes, but no one mentioned dinner. At 9:30 I had described with minuteness what factories and mills were like, and my wife was expressing her liking for Italian dishes. At ten (having lunched at eleven o'clock that morning) we both showed signs of faintness, but still talked on. At eleven all the children were asleep on the floor or in their mothers' arms, my wife seemed dead of fatigue, and my own exhaustion was complete, when something broke the spell and Mrs. Squadrito suddenly threw up her hands with a pious ejaculation and darted up-stairs. In ten minutes we were seated at a most delightful supper, including a heaping dish of boiled snails. The whole family had forgotten in the excitement that neither they nor we had dined, but they certainly made up for the oversight.

In this house, as in most others, the top floor was used for the dining-room and kitchen. The kitchen was in one corner—a sort of low altar of stone and plaster, with a hollow in the centre for charcoal. As some American architects have learned, cooking done on the top floor neither scents up nor heats the house.

96 IMPORTED AMERICANS

We sat chatting about the table until the cracked bell in the tower of the church in the square struck one, then my wife and I sought the repose and comfort of the big, high-set bed of the guest-room.

It was a strange sound which awoke me. Paradoxically, it was something very familiar. Clear and sweet, very distinct in the air of the early morning, a boy's voice high up in the terraced vineyards on the slope before the town was singing:

"Who was it called them down?

'Twas Mister Dooley, brave Mister Dooley,

The finest man this country ever knew;

Diplomatic,

Democratic,

Oh! Mister Dooley—ooley—ooh."

Then there broke forth the chatter of men, women and children who were gathering grapes, and had stopped to listen to an American song. The boy had been in America two years, his father had contracted consumption working in the New York subway, and the family had returned that he might recover in the balmy air of Sicily. One day the boy told me that as soon as he was big enough (he is eight years old) he was going to run away and go to America, because he could make more money selling papers after school than he could working all day in the fields in Gualtieri, and here he "never had no time for no fun."

The spirit of this incident is the spirit which to-day stirs all Italy, all Greece, all Syria, all Hungary and Roumania, and has spread deep into the hearts of the people of the whole of southern Europe. The eyes of the poor are turned with longing fancy to "New York." That is the magic word everywhere.

GUALTIERI-SICAMINO 97

The sound of it brings light to a hundred million faces in those lands, and oddly enough not one out of a thousand but believes that to come to America it is necessary to come to New York.

When I opened the battened shutters that took the place of windows, there was a cool inrush of fragrant air, and looking down from the balcony I saw Nicola already at work at his anvil. Carmelo Merlino was at his shoemaker's bench set out before the door, and across the way the Di Bianca girls were giving the fat baby a bath in a large yellow bowl. The baby was splashing the water with great delight. All was peace and industry. We had begun our first full day in Gualtieri life.

People are up betimes in Italy. The very early morning hours are best for work, and a couple of hours' labor is often accomplished before breakfast. An ordinary breakfast is vegetable stew, bread and fruit,—in summer fresh fruit, in winter dried. In fruit-ripening season, on every house-top and balcony, figs are drying, raisins and prunes are in the making, and prematurely plucked fico-d'indias are being made ready for winter use. Canned fruit is little used. A mash of tomatoes to use in winter with spaghetti is always drying at door or on house-top in sunshine.

The midday meal is eaten usually about 11:30, and is much the same, only less is eaten in the summer, and perhaps, though only once or twice a week, some meat, eggs or fowl are made to take the place of the vegetable stew. In the evening soup is served, made with some one of the thousand sorts of spaghetti and macaroni, as I will call it, though that word covers only a part of the great Italian dish, *pasta*. A meat stew may be added and more fruit and wine. I have seen

98 IMPORTED AMERICANS

poor families dine heartily off black bread, fried pumpkin and fico-d'indias, and in homes of more pretension I have eaten very good course dinners.

The men, women and children work in the fields, vineyards and orchards, transport products to market on mule-back, in donkey carts or on platform carts drawn by great white or gray, long-horned oxen. A team of the latter is a beautiful sight. The women not in the fields, in addition to household work, carry heavy jars of water on their heads ; wash clothes in the public *lavacro* ; pick grapes, olives, fruits, almonds, walnuts ; cut, mangle and clean hemp ; gather, flail out ; and clean peas, beans, etc. ; and bear children. The duty of maternity is the first thought of the Italian woman. Fecundity is the prime marital virtue and her principal hold on her husband's esteem.

There are many labors which are shared by men, women and children, such as herding the goats, treading the grapes in the winepress, vegetable-gathering and attending to the irrigation. This latter is very important. The loads which men and women can carry on their heads are huge. I have seen a man coming in at the finish of a five-mile trot with 120 pounds of grapes on his head, and all the way he has maintained a gait very similar to that of a dog. Very early in life the children are taught to carry loads on their heads.

The morning of the second day, people began to come to us for advice and information. There were two or three old men in Gualtieri,—old beyond the ability for anything but very light labor. They wanted to send their sons to America that the boys might get a foothold and then bring them. They all asked me what was the best work for a young man to do in my country. All were farmers living in the village,



Part of the Family Gathered in the Kitchen (*From left to right: Ina, Tono, Giovanina, Antonio, Mrs. Squadrito, Giovanni, Jr., Nicola, Maria*)—Felicia Pulejo—Concetta



1945

who went out each day to work the little patches of ground they called farms.

These holdings were almost invariably owned by some one else, a few by well-to-do people in the village, most of them by the Duke of Avarna, who lives in Naples and never comes near Sicily, though he owns nearly all the ground around Gualtieri. The actual farmers tilled the soil, bought or preserved the seed, supplied the implements, looked after the construction and maintenance of the irrigation, harvested the crop and often marketed it, then gave the landowner's agent, the middleman at Faro near by, half of all they produced. Of what they had left, three per cent went for direct or indirect taxes, and they gave "voluntarily" to the church one tenth. A little calculation will show one that even if a farmer have a prosperous season and be not in debt or have any misfortunes, he retains, when he has finished his contributions to the support of the non-producing classes, aristocrats, tradesmen, army, church, and middlemen, but thirty-eight per cent of what he produces by toil from before dawn till after dark. When I say that ninety-four per cent of the production in southern Italy is agricultural, and that the one important source of wealth is the cultivation of the soil, and the control of wealth the ownership of the land, it can be understood how and why the poor farmer, having heard what betterment there is in the United States will borrow money at twenty per cent for six months to get himself or a son over here to establish a foothold from which he can broaden a space of relief and liberty.

Many of these boys in Gualtieri, anxious to go, desired to escape the forcible conscription every two

100 IMPORTED AMERICANS

years, which takes every other able-bodied young man, and keeps one fifteenth of the able-bodied men of the country under arms at all times. The Italian government never relinquishes its claim on its men for military duty, and no matter whether they become American citizens or not, if they have not served their term and return to Italy, they are arrested and conscripted. A notable test case of this was that of the young man from Baltimore,—Schipriano, son of an Italian general,—in which the government won.

Even though the Squadritos have raised themselves to an independent footing in Gualtieri and own a little land, the power of the landlord was demonstrated fully to me when, on the second day of our stay, Giovanni Squadrito got out from among the things he had brought back from America a nice piece of oilcloth, a treasure in Italy, and tramped off to Faro and presented it to the middleman, the agent of the Duke of Avarna, as a sort of propitiatory offering. At the agent's office there was a considerable staff of clerks and bailiffs, which showed me what a business is this collecting of the crops and rents.

One poor old woman toiled across the hills to see my wife to implore her to take her to America. She had a daughter who had gone there as a servant last year, and in the three months previous to the old woman's first visit to us she had had no letter or word of news. She was nearly frantic and wished to go in search of the girl. In the time we were in Gualtieri before our party started for New York, no tidings came. My wife was forced to tell her that she could never go to America, the age limit and the public-charge law would stop her at Ellis Island and send her back.

It was not unusual for a whole family from far over the hills to arrive late some afternoon to pay their respects, and before they had been seated long a certain uneasiness on the part of the women culminated in the oldest man of the party producing from inside his shirt a strip of paper, much thumbed, torn and pasted. In faded ink it bore the names and addresses of a son, a brother, father, perhaps daughter across the ocean. Though they knew my home to be New York, they were often disappointed because I could not give them news of the beloved relative in Bangor, Me.; Birmingham, Ala.; Brownsville, Tex.; in Chili, Brazil or Canada. One man had a button photograph of Francesco Zotti, who had formerly been my neighbor in New York. As it chanced I once shook hands with Zotti, and when I told his relatives this they actually cried for joy.

The people have no true conception of America, though Italy is flooded with books of views principally of New York and the Pan-American Exposition, and there is a brave effort made by the Italians in America to write home adequate descriptions of the new land. Once I was called upon to settle a most bitter and acrimonious dispute between two men as to what America was like. One, who had a brother in Wilkes-barre, Pa., thought it was all coal mines, steel mills and railroads, while the other, whose cousin worked in a New York barber shop, maintained that America was all high buildings and railroads which run over the house-tops. Each new letter caused the argument to break out afresh.

One woman, who had a husband working in a saloon in Pittsburg, was very effusive in her greeting and her conversation with us until, in answer to her question as to what kind of parrot we had, I replied:

102 IMPORTED AMERICANS

"Why, my dear madam, we *have* no parrot."

I noticed a look of suspicion shoot across her face, and her manner became strangely reserved. I could see that from that moment she was extremely skeptical about anything we said. In a little while, when talking aside with some member of the family, she openly expressed her doubt that we were Americans or had ever been in America. This was laughingly repeated to me for a reassertion as to our nationality.

"What makes you think we are not Americans?" I asked the dubious visitor.

"Because you have no parrot."

I do not hesitate to say I thought she must be demented, but in further explanation she produced a bunch of her husband's letters to prove her statements, and, reading them through hastily, I found that there is a parrot in the saloon where he 'tends bar, and one across the street, and the things these two parrots do and say make up the burden of his letters home, so his wife was convinced that America is a land of parrots.

For days there was a constant succession of gaieties, and I was glad we were not compelled to eat and drink one tenth of what was set before us. We were loaded with messages from fathers, mothers, brothers, sweethearts, wives, children, and friends for those already in America.

The Mannino family, living across the *torrente* in the western section of the town, being relatives of the Squadritos, were foremost in trying to do the honors of the relationship and were much concerned that a young nephew go with us, but I saw at a glance that he had *favus*, and I told them he would be excluded. He was insistent and started for Naples to take a steamer of another line, having been assured that by

GUALTIERI-SICAMINO 103

the payment of one hundred francs to some persons at Naples he could be smuggled through. Soon a telegram came from Naples, saying the people who were going to smuggle him had robbed him of every cent. He asked for more money, it was sent him, and he sailed. I have so far failed to find any trace of him, but he did not return to Gualtieri and I believe he must have entered the United States through Canada, as this is a mode of ingress the United States is yet seeking to completely block. Of all the wealth of trickery and immigration fraud which I afterwards was able to lay my hands upon, this was the very first hint, and yet what would have been a fine specific case has escaped me.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SICILIAN COUNTRYSIDE

IT seemed wise, during our stay in Gualtieri-Sicamino, to make a study of more than lay in the province of Messina, and so we pursued the same methods of research employed in the provinces of the mainland, but found the conditions of life among the Sicilians so equable with that of Gualtieri-Sicamino, that to tell what we saw elsewhere would be but to repeat what is said of the village home of the Squadritos, with the exception of a few notable incidents.

The northern side of the island is much more fertile and is therefore more densely populated than the southern slopes, which are unprotected from the hot winds from Africa; and in the mountains back from Girgenti and Sciacca where travel is quite difficult except on mule-back, the state of the people is of the most primitive sort, and a man who can read and write is a man of distinction in the community in which he lives. Some of the families are of a complexion that is nearly Malayan, and their long black hair is beautiful to see. Wherever a branch office of a steamship ticket broker has been established and emigration started, or wherever the tourist goes scattering gold, there is a marked difference from the communities where a stranger is nearly a catastrophe.

The western end of the island is the famous Marsala wine district, and one firm controls all of the best



the Author's Room—Teresa di Bianca—The Old
 n up the Valley—Shyness in Shawl and Pattens—
 Children Labor in the Fields

XXXXXX
XXXXXX



THE SICILIAN COUNTRYSIDE 105

vineyards but a few, which are gradually being forced into the monopoly. One man who was regularly employed by this company told me that he received thirty-five lire per month for ten hours' labor per day (about twenty-one cents per day).

Catania is the exporting centre of the eastern end of a rather prosperous sulphur-mining district on the eastern coast of the island, and in this harbor are vessels constantly loading with sulphur for the American and German markets. It is estimated that about fifty thousand people derive their livelihood from this industry, and it is the one notable industry other than agriculture in the entire island. The largest though not the most fertile plain of Sicily is about Catania, and some very fine estates are to be found there, owned for the most part by wealthy people in Messina or Naples, perhaps resident in the beautiful cities of northern Italy.

The political disturbances which have made Sicily an uncertain quantity in years past, the comparative isolation of Palermo from the central government, and the effect of the traditions of the Sicilian Vespers (1282 A. D.) which are well known to every man, woman and child, topped by the natural supremacy of the educated unscrupulous over the ignorant well-meaning, have caused Palermo to become to a certain extent what Naples is,—the scene of aggregated rogueries. The past twenty years have seen malfeasances by high officials, impositions by aristocrats, commercial and political plots, and outrages by declared criminals, which brand the beautiful capital of the Sicilian state as a nesting-place of the boldest and most nefarious malefactors in all Italy. The common people are not dishonest in the degree that the

106 IMPORTED AMERICANS

Neapolitans are, but the educated classes can boast some bright and shining lights in the public and private hold-up game that should make even St. Louis or Philadelphia envious. An English officer of a Liverpool tramp steamer, who has spent a very great deal of time in Palermo when shore superintendent of a line in the lemon trade, told me that "a Palermo politician can give any Tammany district leader cards and spades, and beat him with his hands tied."

Col. John A. Weber, of Buffalo, formerly Immigrant Commissioner at the Port of New York, thinks immigration should be encouraged to an even greater volume than at present, but that dishonest and illegal naturalization is a rotten spot in the matter. In this he is correct, and I would add that my observations have been that more men from Palermo, who have found even that city too hot for them, are engaged in the brokerage of naturalization papers in the United States and Italy than any other city's representatives. A bill newly introduced by Congressman Gulden, of New York, is intended as a corrective, but I doubt its efficiency.

One of the first things that strikes the American visitor to the rural districts of Calabria, Sicily or Apulia, and even farther north, is the antiquated processes employed by the farmers. A man who knows what a sulky plow and a harvester are rebels at the sight of an entire peasant family spading up a field or reaping a crop with sickles, and there is a vast difference between a big green and red Studebaker wagon drawn by two good horses and loaded to the top boards with apples or potatoes, and a string of donkeys, women, and children laden with paniers and head-baskets; but the introduction of modern farming methods into Italy

THE SICILIAN COUNTRYSIDE 107

would have an effect equivalent to a visit of plague. The three million three hundred thousand people who live from the soil in Sicily, for instance, win for each his portion of food stuffs by hand labor on the farms or in the village workshops, where work is traded for food very often directly; and the introduction of machinery which would dispense with the labor of more than half the people would upset the system of division of products of the soil and prove a terrible calamity.

Outside of the number of a few noted vineyards where there are power plants for wine-making, the great volume of Sicilian wine, which is strong, of good nutritious quality and flavor, is produced by hand processes. The grapes are gathered in season by men, women and children, and borne in paniers or baskets to the trampling-vats, which are often two miles from the vineyard, and in some instances more. I have seen a half-dozen little girls, the youngest too small to speak plainly, the oldest not over eight, going plodding along in the dust between vineyard and press, with loads of grapes on their heads.

The grapes are dumped into the stone-built, plastered trampling-vat, which drains into a butt, and when enough, say a layer of six inches of thickness, has been put in, the peasants get in with pants and skirts rolled up, and tramp the grapes into a pulp. This trampling is usually given up to old men or women whose sight is defective, or whose hands are distorted by accident or rheumatism from years of wine-drinking, and who are thus not so valuable at picking and carrying grapes. I remember, at a press near Collesamo, seeing two old women trampling grapes with their skirts rolled up and pinned about their hips, and far up on their thighs were

108 IMPORTED AMERICANS

the purple stains of the fruit. As they tramped they sang the high, nasal, droning *canto* of their village.

The pulp is taken out in forms and put into a press which operates by screw power, the screw being a huge beam of wood which has had a screw thread carved on it by hand, and the power is the leverage of a pole mortised into the top of the upright screw, and sloping down to where two men can seize it, or a horse, ox or donkey be hitched to it.

One of the wine-presses in Gualtieri is owned by a fine old country gentleman by the name of Betto, a freeholder who has prospered in the heating and forging of the several iron she has in the community fire; and after a visit to his press he took us up to his house, one of the very best in the region, and set before us wine that was so old it had changed color twice and was, at the time of uncorking, a pale amber with light-flecks in it here and there.

If there were spots in the southern provinces on the peninsula where the irrigation systems were worthy of note, then indeed did the artificial watering of the soil in Sicily appear wonderful. In that extremely fertile spot called the Conca d'Oro "Shell of Gold," which surrounds Palermo, not only is every natural spring and stream sought out and redirected, but deep artesian wells tap the subterranean waters. Where the sides of the mountains in the interior are terraced far up, in an effort to increase the area of tillable land, water conduits have been hewn out of solid rock in spots, and streams carried for miles over barren places to moisten a patch or two of productive soil. Looking on such works of patience, one can fully realize the hard necessity of the Sicilian; and one cannot help thinking how much better it would be for all concerned if the Sicilian peasant,

THE SICILIAN COUNTRYSIDE 109

when he emigrates to the United States, instead of becoming a barber, a fruit-peddler, a trencher, or following some other of the favorite temporary pursuits which allow the immigrants to congregate in large cities or their environs, he should be given an opportunity to try his irrigating skill on some of the fine undeveloped land in the West, where a little carefully applied water and seed will bring any man a wealth of results at harvest-time.

I do not think there was a soul of reasoning years within a radius of several miles of the mountain village of Gualtieri-Sicamino who did not know that on the last Tuesday of September, Antonio Squadrito, with a part of his family, a number of neighbors, and his two American friends, would be leaving for Naples, to embark thence on the *Prinzessin Irene* for New York. When, in the sixth year preceding, Antonio had been one of a handful of the first emigrants from that section, every one, even his own family, had been dubious and pessimistic about the venture. Since then more than one tenth of the population has followed him, and any remaining pessimism was restrained, and those who were too poor to go, too old or too well situated to take new chances, vented openly expressions of envy.

From San Filipo, a near-by village, where almost half of the people have the dreaded eye-disease, trachoma, an old man hobbled over to Gualtieri to ask if there was not some way that he could go to America. He had a nephew earning \$1.20 a day in the mines in Belmont County, Ohio, and he felt sure that if he got there his nephew would find him work enough to do. He said he could sell his few belongings for five hundred lire, enough to take himself and his wife to Ohio.

110 IMPORTED AMERICANS

I looked at his gaping, granulated lids and told him that he could never go. He sat with his head bent on the top of his staff for a long time in silence, then, with working features and trembling hands, rose and said good-bye. A day or so later a very brown, shy little girl brought over three fine squashes, a present to us from the old pair.

I was somewhat concerned when I learned that Concetta Fornica, a beautiful young girl of sixteen, a relative of the Squadrito family, who was to go with us, was the daughter of a San Filipian and had lived in the afflicted village. She had some slight inflammation of the eyes, but it did not seem to be trachoma, and Dr. Giunta, the village medico, assured me that, though her father had it, she did not. Since the disease is highly contagious by contact of hand, towel, handkerchief or anything that the head touches, and there are few oculists who claim to be able to effect permanent cures and none who are able to remove the cicatrices from the inside of the lids, the causes for concern can be easily understood. There were only two cases in Gualtieri, so Dr. Giunta said, and one was her father. He is blind almost half the time. Those who are known to have the disease are required to have separate toilet articles for their own use.

Antonio, as the actual head of the Squadrito family, was in hot water constantly over the matter of who should go to America and who should not. All of the remaining members of the family, with the possible exception of the eldest daughter, Giovanina, and the mother, were wild to come to America and join the three brothers at their little barber shop in Stonington, Conn. Giovanina alone was looking forward to the day of her marriage with her soldier lover. The

THE SICILIAN COUNTRYSIDE 111

small boys were simply insane on the subject of America. One of them approached my wife with an air of great mystery one day and confided to her a plan whereby he would himself borrow the money to buy his ticket, and she could hide him under her shawl and bring him through. But a great reversal in the family plans came when Giovanni, the father, who, remembering his two hard years in America, announced that he had come home to stay. He said he liked home and village life too well to go back. I told him that I believed the restless germ of the American spirit lurked somewhere in his system and that he would change his mind. This has proved entirely true. As I write, a letter lies before me in which he says that he wants to come back. Home comforts and familiar pleasures and labors are all right, but he "can't stand it."

When the father had so decided, there was no question as to whether the mother should come, and the small boys' chances were effaced. Nicola decided to stay by his prosperous smithy, Maria clung to her mother, and Vincenzo, who had a cartelaginous growth over his left eye, was told to wait till his eye had been operated upon and then he might come. Of course, there was a small storm, especially from the younger members of the household; but Antonio poured oil on the troubled waters by promising to return next year and take every one who would go. It was a treacherous compromise, and since the father has changed his mind I believe this year will see nearly the entire family in America.

We were to be joined at Messina by Giuseppe Cardillo and several other people, and by the Papalia family from Monforte-Spadafora; but our party as finally

112 IMPORTED AMERICANS

constituted had the following people from Gualtieri, and throughout the trip they continued to be our party proper and were directly under our care:

Antonio Squadrito, Camela Squadrito and her child, Caterina; Mrs. Squadrito's brother, Giovanni Pulejo, a barber; Felicia Pulejo, a nephew; Concetta Fomica, the pretty young cousin; Antonio Nastasia, a sixteen-year-old boy neighbor; Gaetano Mullura, in the same category; Nicola Curro, aged twenty-seven, an intimate friend of the family, a finished cabinet-maker; Nunzio Giunta, son of a prominent family of the village, a big, powerful fellow of twenty-three, just out of five years' service in the police or Carabineers; Antonio Genino, twenty-one years of age, a cheese-maker going to a cousin in Philadelphia; and Salvatore Niceta, Benedetto Runzio, Luciano Sofia and Salvatore Damico, four farmer-boys from Gualtieri-Socosa, a detached village of the community, all going to the Banca Gelantado in Philadelphia, destined for the mines.

These boys afforded a very fine example of the latest methods of evading the contract-labor law. They had no contract in writing, merely the letter of an uncle of one of them promising work if they would come. He was not to employ them, but he would turn them over to men who would. This is the method by which scores of big corporations in America, which dare not import Italian laborers by reason of the law on this matter, do it by making the contract here with a relative or friend of some group of men in an Italian community, and the relative or friend brings them over. The men are instructed to answer the question as to whether they have been promised work or not by saying they have not. Out of 1903's approximate million emigrants, only 1,086 were refused

THE SICILIAN COUNTRYSIDE 113

admittance as alien contract laborers. One large industrial corporation at Buffalo, N. Y., alone received nearly half that many, and those who passed successfully through to other parts of the country can be easily imagined. I do not hesitate to say that it is impossible to defeat this fraud by any operations on this side of the sea.

In a later chapter there will be shown the outlines of a plan which will offset the weaknesses of the enforcement of the alien contract-labor law, and I shall throw light in numbers of places on the true meaning of "assisted emigration."

The first official procedure of the many and intricate ones necessary for the departure of emigrants and their admission to the United States was the obtaining of the passports for the male members of the party. The women and children are entered on the passport of some man of their family or party. The first step is getting the birth certificate from the secretary of the municipality in which one is born, so Antonio, the elder Pulejo, Concetta's father, young Giunta, Curro, and the father of the Socosa boys went before Giacomo Marini, and when he had consulted the register and found that all had been duly born in Gualtieri, birth-certificates were issued, signed by himself and the president of the municipality, or mayor. As for myself, wishing to return as an Italian to America and not as an American, a birth-certificate was issued to me as having been born *nel commune di Londra*, son of Paolo Brandi and Migone Caterina. I regret to say it was necessary to take undue advantage of the old secretary to carry my point. Precious little good it did me, though.

These birth-certificates were then forwarded by

114 IMPORTED AMERICANS

Carmelo Merlino, the shoemaker steamship agent, who was on a high wave of prosperity through sending so many people at once, to one Mazzulo, in Messina, whose nominal duties are to take the birth-certificates before the *questura* or police headquarters of Messina district, where the personal record of each man in the district is kept for both military conscription and reserve, as well as criminal vigilance purposes. If there was anything in that record which would cause the questor to think that one of our party should be refused permission to depart, he would not issue the passport, and the emigrant could not leave the country, as each person must have a passport in which is an identifying description of the bearer so complete as to make an exchange of passports impossible with the careful scrutiny which is given them by the Italian police officials in Naples.

As things fell out, none of our party were refused the very necessary passport except myself. The accuracy of the Italian system is shown by this. I was refused because they had no record of me; and my birth-certificate was returned as irregular, and the local police would have arrested me if I had persisted in trying that method.

Now, all of this goes to prove one of the most important facts in connection with Italian emigration: that the *questura* of each district is slowly and effectually clearing the district of its criminal class by dumping the lot into North and South America, the most dangerous coming to the United States as the best field for their further operations.

Here is the syllogism:

Since American police records and prison statistics, especially those of the United States secret service,



mo Marini, the Municipal Secretary—Nicola Squadrito at Work (*Carmelo Merlino at the right*)

2023-2024

THE SICILIAN COUNTRYSIDE 115

show large and increasing numbers of Italian criminals in this country;

And since the mass of these can enter only by immigration;

And since the immigrant must have a passport from the chief of his local police district;

And since every criminal's record is kept in the district in which he was born, and he must go there to get the birth-certificate on which he gets his passport,—

Then these thousands of passports issued annually to criminals are given by chiefs of police who know the records of the men who are receiving them, and are thus deliberately ridding their districts of them to save themselves trouble and increase their reputation for efficiency.

That those secret instructions which are issued from Rome to the chief of each district advise any such procedure I do not believe. They do advise, so I have been reliably informed, that passports be not issued to prostitutes easy of detection, or to persons over forty-five not accompanied by sons, inasmuch as both classes are very nearly sure to be turned back and to become a matter of expense to the government. That is the bugaboo of Italian statesmen,—expense.

In my own case I knew I would have no difficulty concerning my passport until I came to the gate in the police-office in Naples; then I must have a passport either American or Italian. Any chance of getting an Italian one had been quickly shattered; and yet, if I went on the ship's manifest as an American I would not be entering the United States in the desired rôle. The solution of the difficulty was not reached till we were in Naples.

When Antonio and the others had their passports,

116 IMPORTED AMERICANS

then the tickets were issued to them by the agents, and not before, the lot being returned to Gualtieri by post. Now there was no turning back. Camela began to waver, and hourly there was some new dread to suffuse her eyes with tears.

One day Antonio Nastasia's father went to Messina, taking some of the money which he had labored hard as a tinsmith and sheet-iron worker to accumulate, and spent nearly all of it in buying clothes for little Antonio to wear. Curro spent a month's wages on a new suit. Giunta's relatives prepared him a considerable wardrobe, and altogether nearly half as much as was needed to pay the passage of the entire party was spent in buying Italian clothes to wear to America. The senselessness of this proceeding is plain when it is said that few of these new clothes were worn after the first day or two in the States.

Something else equally ill-advised was the making of huge trunks by Nicola Squadrito and others, in which the families of the departing ones packed quantities of every conceivable sort of supply, just as if the voyagers were going to a new, wild land to begin life as best they could. Despite the protestations of Antonio, my wife and myself, Camela, crammed into huge boxes two sets of heavy mattresses with all the accompanying bedding; large cans of *pomidoro*; olive oil; sticks on which dried figs were impaled; flasks of wine; forms of cheese; old clothes; and cooking-utensils, many of which were new; and Concetta Fomica's mother repeated the performance. Enough excess baggage, freight and customs duty were paid, before we were through, on these big encumbrances to replace the whole lot twice over in America.

The last days were at hand. We were to leave

THE SICILIAN COUNTRYSIDE 117

on Tuesday before dawn. On Saturday afternoon a request came from an old woman up the valley that we see her—she being unable to come to us—before we departed. As we followed the stony *torrente* path to her home, her story was told to us. Twenty-three years ago, when she was a bride of little more than a year and a mother but a month, her husband had gone to America, the first man to emigrate from all that region, nearly eighteen years before Antonio Squadrito and the others had started the flood. She had received one letter in which he said he had changed his name to Frank Smith, as nobody had any patience with his Italian name. She never heard from him after that, and after her one boy died she continued to live alone in the little house Francesco had built for her and waited for Francesco's return. For a living she worked in the fields in summer, and in the early autumn in the vineyards and the lemon, olive, and orange orchards.

We found her spinning with the old distaff in the sunshine before her door. She set before us such humble hospitality as her hut afforded, and then told us she wanted us to begin a search in America for a Frank Smith, and she desired to turn over her savings, thirty-two lire (\$6), to defray the expenses. She could not understand why we would not take it. It may be that these lines will fall beneath the eye of a man who long since left all his Italianism behind him and is now a thoroughgoing American and no longer Francesco. If so, I bid him remember that there is a faithful woman waiting for him in the Sicilian hills.

CHAPTER IX

THE DEPARTURE

AS the sun was sinking this Saturday, the bells in the tower of the principal church began an unwonted clangor, and I was told that the Squadrito relatives had paid for a special service at vespers for the safe journey and prosperity of our party. As we wound along our way to the village we could see little groups of people, some in holiday dress, and others, for the most part, in the clothes in which they left the fields, the wine-presses, the cheese-shops, the smithies and the orchards. As we entered the square we met one of the priests, a benign old man, one of the truest and best types of the sincere rural clergy I have ever seen. After taking a pinch of snuff, he offered the box to me with a quizzical smile, knowing full well the un-Americanism of snuff. There was a hasty exchange of compliments and well-wishes, then he passed on to the sacristy.

Jules Breton has caught and put on canvas, more than once, the spirit of peasant piety which pervaded that vespers; the air of restful, provincial, old-world religious fixity, breathing through the richly colored and wonderfully picturesque scene in that ancient church.

Around the tallow-encrusted base of the figure of San Francesco, the patron saint of the village, flared the great yellow candles. A few glimmered on the altar.

The figure stood on a pedestal a little to one side of the centre of the church. To the left, kneeling on the worn stones of the floor, or sitting on tiny rush-bottomed chairs, were the closely grouped women, some few in the coveted black-lace prayer-shawls, but the mass in the solid-colored commoner ones, drawn over the head and spreading out into a cone around the kneeling or sitting figure. These shawls, dark red, green, or yellow, treasured among the poor, made that night in the candle-light a softened color-scheme that is indescribable. To the right were the men and boys, clad for the most part in the baggy homespun worn in the fields, though here and there some villager boasted a suit from the tailor's hands.

As we entered, an old man with furrowed face, horn spectacles and raucous voice, and a slender, Raphael-faced boy, both in vestments, were chanting from well-thumbed books held into the light of the candles about the saint's figure. Overhead in the choir the old organ toiled uncertainly through the music of the service, and ever and anon the boy took up and rang the tinkling silver bell.

His clear, superb soprano voice was in fine contrast with that of the elder singer, but the whole scene, the portion of the service at the altar, the muffled murmur of the people repeating the forms, the rustle and stir as they knelt or rose, the shifting of the shadows on the wall, was all so strange, almost barbaric, yet so harmonious and beautiful that its very detail was evasive.

When the service was ended, the people, without haste or without form, gathered around the priest while he christened a tiny wailing infant, held up by the midwife, with the proud father at her side.

120 IMPORTED AMERICANS

They named it Giuseppe. Yet another to join the millions of Giuseppes, Giacomos and Giovannis!

As we left the church, the father of the child followed us and bade us come to his house, where the christening was being celebrated. Through the dark, narrow streets we wended our way to the other end of the town, climbed the stone stairs to an overcrowded upper room, and spent a politely sufficient length of time eating anise cakes and drinking sweet wine.

With the tact of womankind, my wife had brought some trinkets of American origin as a gift for the child, whereat the assemblage beamed its appreciation, and just before we left the father said to me aside, as if it was a secret he was keeping from his wife: "If I can save twenty more lire, the next one will be born in Pittsburg, praise the Holy Mother."

At home all the favored neighbors and relatives had gathered for a dance. The large room on the ground floor of the Casa Squadrito was ringed around with a double row of guests. Whole families sat together, on the stairway were seated the youngsters already drowsy; crowding around the wide door opening into the street were the unbidden, but none the less interested and curious. The head of the Mannino family, weary with the labors of his sixty years and the fatigue of a stiff, home-laundered collar, was nodding before the music struck up, occasionally raising his head to blink at the light solemnly and to make sure none of the young men were unduly near his daughter, the heiress of his hard-got wealth.

Every one who had any heavy gold rings, bracelets or brooches, or any of the pretentious gold-mounted strands of old coral, which are handed down so care-

fully from mother to daughter, had them on, for a display of gold ornaments is a sure sign of rural social distinction. Feet that were rarely shod were now encased in *scarpi* made by Carmelo Merlino and his fellow craftsmen in the village, and dress among women in the throng varied from a department store ready-made cloth gown sent home from America to a ragged working frock, the wearer of which kept her shoeless and stockingless feet shyly tucked out of sight.

All were awaiting our arrival, for Antonio, who was with us, was host as well as chief musician. A home-made acetylene lamp, of the blacksmith brother's contriving, was lighted and set high up on a bracket, throwing every object in the room, even to the boys perched in the transom, into sharp relief. The mandolins and guitars hanging on the wall were taken down, and with a skilful, brilliant prelude—for he is an excellent mandolin-player—Antonio swept into one of the stirring, if monotonous time-honored *tarantelle* airs.

Even though eyes were dancing in young faces all around the room, all were too shy to take the floor till, Giovanina and Maria Squadrito urging into acquiescence two of the Di Bianca girls, the four formed a square and began a swaying, pirouetting movement, preceding the whirling and crossing over with the accompanying snapping of the fingers in imitation of the castanet, and the smiting of the tambourines. Round and round they whirled, across and back, first one set of partners, then the other, the assemblage applauding a little shyly as yet.

The *tarantelle* is called after the black spiders about Taranto, whose dangerous bites killed so many people early in the fifteenth century that many odd cures

122 IMPORTED AMERICANS

were proclaimed, and one that was officially advocated was music and dancing. I do not know whether the *tarantelle* dance which was evolved did the spider-victims any good, but a fanatical wave of dancing swept over the peninsula and the surrounding island, and the *tarantelle* became a fixture among the folk-customs of the southern provinces.

When the young girls were weary, an effort was made to get the young men out and into action, but all of them seemed to be in the throes of a monstrous diffidence. Little Giovanni Squadrito, Jr., and his small brother Tono were not thus afflicted, and dragged out the Di Bianca boy, a handsome fellow, dressed in the best Roman fashion, and another youngster who, though a child in years, had massive work-scarred hands. The four gave an exhibition of dancing that was delightful indeed, and when Giovanni and Tono went skipping about, their hobnailed shoes scratching and clattering on the tiles, their mother's face beamed with real pride. Although very weary with a hard day's work preparing for the departure, she was among the brightest and merriest of the company.

Then Nicola, the blacksmith, and the shoemaker steamship agent, persuaded a third loutish youth to take the floor, but a fourth dancer was lacking. At the instant when the last of the other men had refused to take the floor as yet, the village butcher appeared in the door and was hailed with acclaim by those who knew his terpsichorean gifts. He glided into his place on the tiles, drew tighter the knot in his neckerchief, ran his hand through his Saturday-night stubble of beard, tossed his hat to a friend and entered upon the most startling, dashing, withal graceful and self-contained feats in dance movements I have ever seen.

He was on his tiptoes the greater part of the time and gave a perfect reproduction of the traditional dance.

Then something happened that is rare—the men and women danced together, waltzing; and when, after a number of varied dances, *tarantelle* and square, a dance by the old folks was called for, the first person to respond was Mrs. Squadrito. In vain the people of his own age endeavored to get the slumber-smitten Mannino on his feet. At last Giovanina, who had been dancing almost constantly, filled the vacant place among the elder people, and the music broke forth once more. I caught my wife's eyes turned to me in amazement, and I replied in kind. Caterina Squadrito, with fifty-five years of hard labor and the bearing and rearing of ten children behind her, danced a long round of the *tarantelle* with an ease, grace and abandon which put to shame the efforts of her youngest daughter. When she was gyrating and swaying in the middle of the floor, with all the mass of people about keeping time to the music, laughing and applauding, that room presented a picture which I shall never forget.

Not long after this the mothers who were holding their sleeping children in their arms grew too weary of the burdens and started for home. The others made haste to follow and filed by us, bowing formally as they offered their hands, wishing us good-night and *bon riposo*.

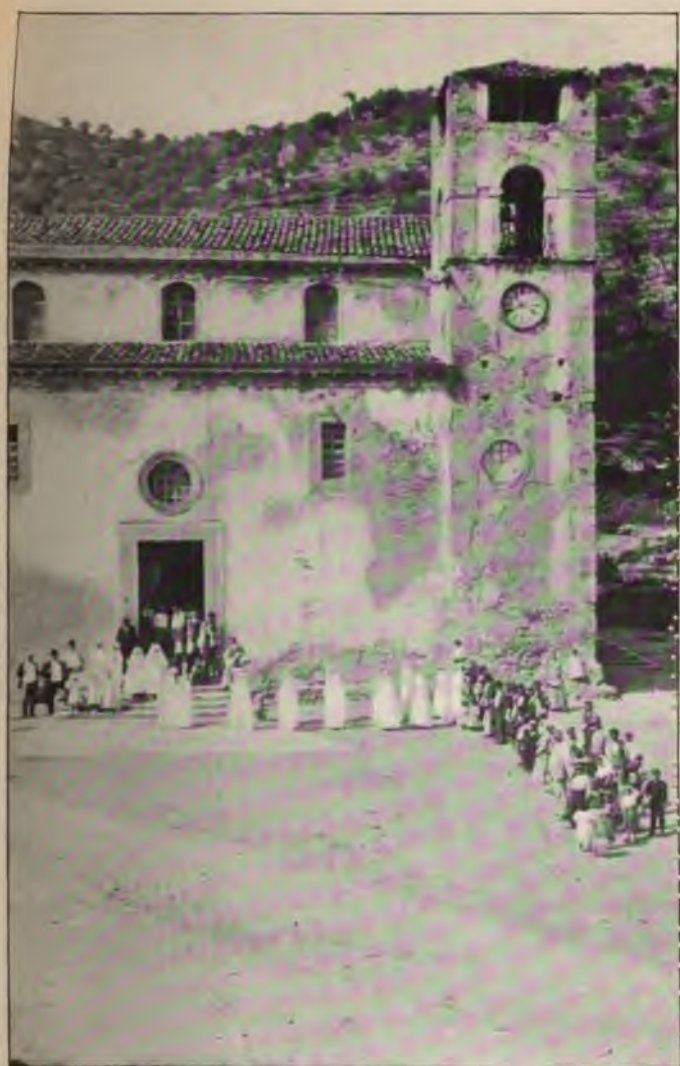
Sunday morning bright and early the entire family began that weekly process of cleaning and dressing up which is, I believe, general in all rural districts of Christian countries. Little Ina was arrayed in a pretty little white dress, with a long white veil, and on her head was set a wreath of artificial leaves and white

flowers. Going by in the street were others. It being her last Sunday, all of her little friends put on their festa dress in her honor, and a procession of the children was held from a church in another quarter of the village to the one on the square.

In the afternoon Camela took little Ina by the hand and set off for some place by herself. I noticed that a sort of solemnity pervaded the household; that she was crying as she went; that no one offered to accompany her; and that she carried a large bouquet of flowers. I soon learned that she had climbed the hill behind the town to the graveyard on its summit, to spend the last hours she could ever spend beside the graves of her father and her mother.

There were renewed streams of visitors later in the day, and at night a pleasant gathering at the home of the Giuntas, where we were shown, among other things, a very fine collection of old jewelry, inherited by our hostess from an aunt. In this company there were fewer people, and they were more select as village society goes than the large gathering at the Squadritos' the night before. Antonio, being very popular in the village, and quite democratic despite his prosperity, had asked humble and pretentious alike to his home, and neither caste gave a sign, such as they would have given on the street, that they were not of the same strata. There are some very fine and delicate things in Italian social customs. Before we left we were bidden to a little garden party which Mrs. Giunta had planned for us on the afternoon of the next day. It was to be held on a scrap of an estate owned by the family, situated up the *torrente* a short distance.

That night, after we had returned home, we were



Ina and Her Friends in Procession to the Church for Fare-
well Blessings

24307
LUN

serenaded by a troupe of the village male vocalists, who wandered about until near dawn. The boy, Salvatore Vazzana, whom I have mentioned as singing in the church, sang "Luna, O Luna," with a triple guitar accompaniment. The serenaders were then standing in the white moonlight at a point down by the *torrente* wall, so that in the stillness the clear, sweet voice and the throbbing, twanging *compagnamento* carried to every part of the town and came back faintly from the farther hills.

The Giuntas are a large family. All the present heads of separate households are the children of one aged woman, still living in Gualtieri, who has given birth to twenty-two, all told. Most of these are living, and nearly all have prospered. One is the only man in Italy who can stop a government train, even the Brindisi express, in any spot beside the track where he may appear. He shows his badge as inspector-general, and the train pulls up and takes him on. This attribute was related to us by every fresh group of people we met in the community, and he is considered by them to be a very wonderful man indeed. Our host, on the Sunday evening before mentioned, is one of the few men who own land about Gualtieri or in the district controlled by the Duke of Avarna.

Monday afternoon he and his wife and one or two other guests called for us at the house, and, accompanied by Antonio, Giovanina, Maria, Camela, little Ina, Giovanni, Jr., and Tono, we walked over the *torrente* path, in the blazing sun, to the gate of one of his farms of garden size. At the gate we met his brother, the village doctor, bound ahorse to see some patients higher up in the mountains. After looking over the splendidly cultivated place and inspecting the

THE IMPORTED AMERICANS

impersonal services, yet not one dinner, but none the less effective. We are given in a report of fruits of those days that our remembrance and name. The description of the party if the garden tells its own story. I am acquainted it has dealt as mercifully with their regrets as our best attempted to deal with the people there what is a different story to tell of southern life in 1867.

Monday evening was a time of turmoil. First of all the great mass of things was got off to the station before dark. Then those who had delayed till the last minute in writing messages for friends and to bid us farewell appeared. I took all the messages, but drew the line at presents for relatives in Missouri, especially twenty-pound tins of cheese and five-gallon cans of olive oil. In the Squawman household there was too much excitement for great grief only now and then one of the members would break out with a wail and throw his or her arms around some one of those who were to go. By seven o'clock everything was packed up, and Antonio mandatorily dismissed all the neighbors and sent everybody to bed. As the silence of the outer night crept into the house, there became audible the sobbing of the poor old mother as she lay thinking of the near separation from her own flesh and blood.

The heads of the weary and worn seemed scarcely to have touched their pillows before awakening voices rang in the house and street, the feeling of dread, chill exhaustion and discomfort that goes with sleep-breaking at one o'clock seemed to rest numbingly on every one. The tumultuous grief of the night before had given place to a sort of hushed woe. A short time to dress, a bite to eat, then into the dark, narrow street

with sleep-heavy eyes, to meet a crowd of hundreds come to see the party off. It is wonderful how little noise that concourse made as it moved out of the square, over the ancient bridge, to the beginning of the mountain road.

The parting with the mother and sisters occurred at the door of the Squadrito home. The mother was so overcome with her sorrow that, shaken with dry sobs and murmuring broken blessings, her daughters, unable to speak themselves from weeping, loosened her arms from about Antonio and Camela and bore her to her couch.

At the edge of the village a group of donkeys was in readiness. Here the crowd paused. Not more than seventy-five elected to walk the seven miles to the station and back, and there were few relatives among them. Antonio's father was as completely broken down as if he was giving his favorite son and the others to the grave, instead of their departing for a happy land.

It was with difficulty that those natural leaders among the people effected the final separations, but at last, in the starlight, the two groups drew apart on the highway, the cavalcade with its foot retinue ascending along the face of the hill, the great, black mass of the crowd grouped about the end of the bridge shouting farewells. Some one struck up a farewell song, several voices joined in, among them the Vazzana boy's clear soprano; but one by one they broke, and soon the song failed and ceased; and as the procession turned the corner that hid the town from view the long file of those left behind could be dimly seen moving back to the darkened homes.

It were ill indeed not to speak of "Bella." The day

128 IMPORTED AMERICANS

before, when donkeys were being hired for the ride to the station, I had been struck by the gentle and affectionate way in which she stood beside her owner's young wife, and had marked her for my own. Experience with the army mule of Missouri extraction and his despised cousin, the Mexican burro, should have made me less trustful.

For a half hour we cantered along in the dark, the babel of talk all about us. At the rougher places I held my camera carefully balanced on Bella's neck in front of me, in order that it be not banged against projecting rocks or by other laden beasts pressing close alongside at times. When one wishes to urge a Sicilian donkey forward, one kicks him in the ribs and shouts high and nasally:

"Ah—a—a—ah!"

We came to a sharp bend in the road, where it turned over a high bridge crossing a deep ravine. Bella heard the braying of the lead donkey already across the bridge and on the other side of the ravine, and suddenly, without consulting me, turned aside and plunged, like a goat, from rock to rock down into the blackness of the ravine. I had been in the tail of the train, and no one missed me, I knew. She would not be checked on her downward course; in fact I was too busy clinging to the precious camera and holding on, to attempt to argue with her. The limbs of olive-trees and the raking thorns of the *mura* swept us from stem to stern. If she knew where she was going I felt very glad, for I certainly did not. High and faint above me I could hear the voices of the party. I was wondering what my chances were for getting out without a broken neck, when suddenly my fair beast struck level ground, and in an instant more a steep ascent. All sounds to

show that the party was still in the vicinity had died away. The donkey went up that precipitous slope with an action that seemed nearly "hand over hand," and, holding the strap of the camera in my teeth, I merely clung desperately about her neck. A stone loosened by her hoofs went crashing, down, down, down, and a cold sweat broke out on my brow.

But in a short time, without one misstep or one minute's uncertainty, she made the climb, came out into a level open space, and stood stock still, looking to the left, and working her ears. I bent down and touched the ground with my fingers, encountering the warm, thick dust of the highway, and in a moment more heard the voices of our party as they turned a bend. Bella had taken a short cut across the ravine. Not having missed us they did not wonder how we had got so far ahead, and I said nothing about the matter.

Soon we wound through the slumbering town of Pagia. A head was now and then thrust out to murmur a sleepy "*Bona notte*," and when some one of us answered, "We go to America," there was always a hearty, "*Bon viaggio e bona fortuna*."

Just beyond the village we heard something, encountered often before, but never under such eerie surroundings. Somewhere in the paths higher up, a shrill young voice raised a wild, plaintive song, and at the end of the first line held the note long drawn out and rounded, though nasal, while many other voices, men, women and children, struck in on a major chord and held it as long as they had breath. This was repeated over and over. It was a band of peasants already on their way to their distant work, singing in the plagal modes, in the darkness and loneliness of the hills.

CHAPTER X

FROM SICILY TO NAPLES

IT was not long before we wound down to the little station, and day began to break in the east, turning the cloud of vapor over Stromboli into the semblance of a huge pink rose growing up out of the island volcano. Many of the people from the country about were gathered to see their own friends off, for there was quite a party by this time. Soon the train crept around the coast from Milazzo and brought up with a jerk and a blast of the conductor's horn. Here farewells were brief. I heard one of the Socosa boys' father cursing the train because it was the agent of the separation from his son, and then out of the hurly-burly came a slamming of compartment doors, cries of "*Pronte! Pronte!*" another blast of the horn, and we were hurried away to Messina.

It was at the station that Antonio's first wrestling-match with the mountain of the party's baggage occurred. At Santa Lucia there had been abundant willing hands to pile it on the train, and no other baggage with which to confuse it. Also, nothing had been said about excess charges. At Messina it was ripped open by the city customs officials, then hustled from place to place till at last it was dispatched to the North German Lloyd office, and Antonio emerged from the encounter a dripping wreck of his former immaculate self. When we next saw it, it was piled into a barge, and standing guard over it was a uniformed govern-

FROM SICILY TO NAPLES 131

ment official who begged piteously before he departed for enough money to buy his dinner, and was well enough satisfied with thirty *centesimi* (about six cents).

I have previously described the operations of the *questura* of Messina. Passports in hand, the entire party joined the great mass of people from all parts of eastern Sicily crowded into the steamship broker's office. Here each person was compelled to make a declaration, which declaration answers the twenty-two questions that are propounded regularly at Ellis Island. When the Socosa boys, in answer to the question as to whether they had work promised or not, said that they had, *the agent advised them to answer this question in the negative*. When Giunta and Curro said they expected no one to meet them, they were advised to get some one, and so on through the group. The steamship broker's agent, in filling out the blanks of this declaration, thus fortified the emigrant in the weak places of his case for admission, and if the emigrant is turned back he has no claim for damages against the brokers. Numbers of suits were formerly brought and won, but under the present system none have been successful, and in cases where the returned emigrant is able to pay for the passage on his deportation the broker can force him to do so.

It will be noticed that I have used the term broker instead of steamship agent. The explanation will be a revelation to most people in the United States, for I found not long since that officials high in the Bureau of Immigration were not aware of the following facts, which is another bit of proof of how weak our system of dealing with immigration from this side of the water is. The steamship company does not book the third-class passengers. Emigration is promoted by

132 IMPORTED AMERICANS

sub-agents in the villages, such as Carmelo Merlino in Gualtieri, who operate under district agents such as Colajanni in Messina, *who are selected, appointed and bonded by the Italian government and not by the steamship company.* They are responsible to the government and not to the steamship company. They deliver their passengers at so much per head to the steamship company at the foot of the plank, and a percentage of their receipts finds its way to the government treasury. They are required to have their offices in what is called a judicial town, where there is a *questura* and the operations of the ticket brokerage system and the police passports dovetail nicely.

The process of clearing all papers, baggage receipts, tickets to the steamer to Naples, tickets to America from Naples, was passed through by our party, and then, it being but little after noon and the hour for going aboard being four o'clock, they scattered. Many went to homes of relatives in Messina for a final visit. Several of the boys spent unwarrantable sums of their precious money in buying ugly looking knives with which to face the dangers that they had read so much about in the papers, cheap, worthless watches, and clothes that would only be thrown away; and everywhere a group passed some of those parasites of the port who prey upon emigrants and make an effort to wheedle or swindle them out of a bit of silver.

On my first visit to Messina I had the pleasure of intimate knowledge of the discovery of a bold fraud, and the arrest and punishment of the thief. He was a man of fair appearance, who had for three years made a practice of stopping emigrants just before they were about to go aboard the steamer by means of the small boats in the harbor, and demanding if they had had



DEPARTURE FROM GUALTIERI

"Declaring" in the Messina Office—Party's Baggage on
Lighter—Friends, Neighbors and Relatives

2
 3
 4
 5
 6
 7
 8
 9
 10
 11
 12
 13
 14
 15
 16
 17
 18
 19
 20
 21
 22
 23
 24
 25
 26
 27
 28
 29
 30
 31
 32
 33
 34
 35
 36
 37
 38
 39
 40
 41
 42
 43
 44
 45
 46
 47
 48
 49
 50
 51
 52
 53
 54
 55
 56
 57
 58
 59
 60
 61
 62
 63
 64
 65
 66
 67
 68
 69
 70
 71
 72
 73
 74
 75
 76
 77
 78
 79
 80
 81
 82
 83
 84
 85
 86
 87
 88
 89
 90
 91
 92
 93
 94
 95
 96
 97
 98
 99
 100
 101
 102
 103
 104
 105
 106
 107
 108
 109
 110
 111
 112
 113
 114
 115
 116
 117
 118
 119
 120
 121
 122
 123
 124
 125
 126
 127
 128
 129
 130
 131
 132
 133
 134
 135
 136
 137
 138
 139
 140
 141
 142
 143
 144
 145
 146
 147
 148
 149
 150
 151
 152
 153
 154
 155
 156
 157
 158
 159
 160
 161
 162
 163
 164
 165
 166
 167
 168
 169
 170
 171
 172
 173
 174
 175
 176
 177
 178
 179
 180
 181
 182
 183
 184
 185
 186
 187
 188
 189
 190
 191
 192
 193
 194
 195
 196
 197
 198
 199
 200
 201
 202
 203
 204
 205
 206
 207
 208
 209
 210
 211
 212
 213
 214
 215
 216
 217
 218
 219
 220
 221
 222
 223
 224
 225
 226
 227
 228
 229
 230
 231
 232
 233
 234
 235
 236
 237
 238
 239
 240
 241
 242
 243
 244
 245
 246
 247
 248
 249
 250
 251
 252
 253
 254
 255
 256
 257
 258
 259
 260
 261
 262
 263
 264
 265
 266
 267
 268
 269
 270
 271
 272
 273
 274
 275
 276
 277
 278
 279
 280
 281
 282
 283
 284
 285
 286
 287
 288
 289
 290
 291
 292
 293
 294
 295
 296
 297
 298
 299
 300
 301
 302
 303
 304
 305
 306
 307
 308
 309
 310
 311
 312
 313
 314
 315
 316
 317
 318
 319
 320
 321
 322
 323
 324
 325
 326
 327
 328
 329
 330
 331
 332
 333
 334
 335
 336
 337
 338
 339
 340
 341
 342
 343
 344
 345
 346
 347
 348
 349
 350
 351
 352
 353
 354
 355
 356
 357
 358
 359
 360
 361
 362
 363
 364
 365
 366
 367
 368
 369
 370
 371
 372
 373
 374
 375
 376
 377
 378
 379
 380
 381
 382
 383
 384
 385
 386
 387
 388
 389
 390
 391
 392
 393
 394
 395
 396
 397
 398
 399
 400
 401
 402
 403
 404
 405
 406
 407
 408
 409
 410
 411
 412
 413
 414
 415
 416
 417
 418
 419
 420
 421
 422
 423
 424
 425
 426
 427
 428
 429
 430
 431
 432
 433
 434
 435
 436
 437
 438
 439
 440
 441
 442
 443
 444
 445
 446
 447
 448
 449
 450
 451
 452
 453
 454
 455
 456
 457
 458
 459
 460
 461
 462
 463
 464
 465
 466
 467
 468
 469
 470
 471
 472
 473
 474
 475
 476
 477
 478
 479
 480
 481
 482
 483
 484
 485
 486
 487
 488
 489
 490
 491
 492
 493
 494
 495
 496
 497
 498
 499
 500
 501
 502
 503
 504
 505
 506
 507
 508
 509
 510
 511
 512
 513
 514
 515
 516
 517
 518
 519
 520
 521
 522
 523
 524
 525
 526

FROM SICILY TO NAPLES 133

their tickets stamped "by the American doctor." The frightened emigrant, knowing that somewhere in the process he would encounter "the American doctor," to him an object of dread, would reply that he had not. The party would then be taken to a small office in an alleyway opening off the water front and a stamp put on the ticket for which the victims would be charged three francs sixty, about seventy cents each. Mr. Charles M. Caughy, the American consul at Messina, caught this fellow and saw to it that he was soundly punished. Our party escaped with a few minor mishaps, thanks to the vigilance of Antonio and myself. One of the boys fell a victim to a fake street dentist who had a carriage, a set of tools and a professional air. He related the sufferings with toothache experienced by emigrants on the Atlantic, and advised the extraction of all bad teeth. One old woman from Catania had three taken out at a franc each. While I was trying to get a photograph of the fakir one of our boys got into the carriage, and the dentist was so eager to have me get a good, full view of his face that he yanked out one of the boy's perfectly good teeth. I am glad the film got torn.

We lunched in a little restaurant off the Via Umberto, entertained by really good music from a beggar violinist who was accompanied by a woman and little girl, both of them cursed by trachoma.

We were disappointed in meeting the Papalia family from Montforte-Spadafora, in fact they came on the next steamer, and for some reason Giuseppe Cardillo's father had decided that Giuseppe and his party should wait; thus we lost at the outset some interesting members from our group as planned.

I improved the opportunity to complete some in-

134 IMPORTED AMERICANS

vestigations in Messina concerning the smuggling of trachomatic emigrants, and will state what I learned in a later chapter, where the information is collected.

The fine Navigazione Generale steamer *Reina Margherita* was the one on which we were to travel to Naples. She went first to Reggio di Calabria to get the crowd there gathered from Greece, Syria, Turkey, Apulia and Calabria. There were not many of the Orientals, and a large part of them expected to sail on the *Citta di Napoli*, of the La Veloce Line, leaving Naples before we did on the *Prinzessin Irene*. I went over and saw them come aboard, as some of our friends would be there.

Some gay parties came down to the dock in *carretas* and on foot, singing and beating tambourines, and one of these brought Gaetano Disalvo, a boy from Scilla going to join his uncle in Buffalo.

One of the boys with Di Salvo was a lithe lad of nineteen who had been a sword-fisherman, a very dangerous occupation pursued in the midsummer months off Scilla. With old Francesco Palmi was his daughter Paolina, a true Calabrese type, and one of the prettiest girls of her class we saw while in Italy. She had been a flower-worker, and was going to New York to marry a man whom she had not seen since she was a little girl, but who had secured "a very fine employment for her paying twenty-eight lire (\$5.60) per week."

When the steamer put back across the Straits to Messina, there was a grand rush to get the emigrants and their baggage aboard. The boatmen who took our party out, though they had been paid by the steamship broker, all such things being included in the 200-lire ticket, demanded and succeeded in getting

FROM SICILY TO NAPLES 135

two lire for their ferrying. We were in the first rapids of the systematic extortion through which the poor emigrant passes on his way from home to Ellis Island, where it stops so suddenly that he is mystified.

It was a striking scene as our last boat put off from the quay, leaving little Antonio Nastasia's father, Nicola Squadrito, Giunta's friends and a few more who had come from Gualtieri, standing in a weeping group in the midst of the many hundreds, waving hats and shouting, "*Bon viaggio, bon viaggio!*"

It was a rough-and-tumble fight to get aboard with the baggage, and the difficulties were increased by the unnecessary and purposeless brutality of the ship's stewards. Here began the blows, the jerkings about and the hustlings, which never ceased throughout the whole process till the poor, ignorant people, driven and herded like cattle, were in the shelter of Ellis Island.

There was a brigadier of police aboard, and when the women had gone below into their compartment and we were trying to secure beds in the men's quarters, he followed the women and offered them insults which make my blood boil as I think of it. When I learned of it he had left the ship.

At last we were settled into our places on the lumpy jute mattresses covered with coarse, dirty bagging, which served as the bedding in the double-tiered iron bunks arranged in blocks eight or nine wide in the middle of the ship, with supplementary rows along the sides.

No attempt was made to feed us, and, anticipating such a condition, we had fortunately brought food with us. Despite all their discomforts, the wilting heat and the foul smells, I do not remember ever hav-

136 IMPORTED AMERICANS

ing seen a happier crowd of people. On every hand musical instruments were out, and groups were singing or chattering like magpies.

In the dusk the beautiful steamer glided out of the harbor by the scores of little groups on the quay at its mouth, and headed up the Straits of Messina for the Bay of Naples, twelve hours away.

While we were on the forecastle head, I noticed little Disalvo come up from below with a long, twisted-up, slender, newspaper in his hands. For a long time he stood by the rail intently watching the shore. When we were off Scilla he lit a match in the shelter of a ventilator and lighted his improvised torch, and I realized that he was going to try to signal his friends on shore. I looked to the land and saw a light moving up and down near a cottage south of the town where I knew he lived. But his answer was a failure and nearly a catastrophe. The strong wind caught the first blaze of the paper and literally rent the burning torch apart, sweeping the burning fragments aft the length of the ship. Fires were narrowly avoided in two places, and the first officer came down from the bridge and read the horror-smitten boy a terrific lecture.

Far into the night we lay on deck, dreading to go below into the reeking atmosphere there. When we did at last, the tumult of crying babies, of people who could not sleep and so essayed to play harmonicas and sing, was almost unbearable. The rule of men and women being separated had not been enforced, and so Antonio and I stayed near the women of our party for their protection,—not from the other passengers, but from the ship's people. At last dawn came, and the haggard look on my wife's face told me what she had passed through.

FROM SICILY TO NAPLES 137

When we went on deck we were within sight of Capri, and two hours later we slid under the shadow of Vesuvius into the beautiful bay of Naples, and when we had snuggled in beside the Palermo steamer at the municipal quay, unloading its throng of emigrants before the custom-house, we, too, were dumped off in the hot sun and left for hours in a broiling heat to await our turn to be conducted to the first steps of that wonderful and interesting process the emigrant goes through in Naples.

CHAPTER XI

THROUGH THE CITY OF THIEVES

IN a half-hearted, divided-responsibility sort of way, the Italian government, the steamship companies and the United States authorities endeavor to do at Naples, the world's greatest port of emigrant embarkation, what should be done thoroughly a stage sooner, viz., to sort out those who are likely to be turned back at Ellis Island and to prevent them from sailing. How much easier, cheaper and more effective to have done it at home!

So far as this narrative of the experiences of my wife and myself and our family party is concerned, I would estimate that stage of the process which was reached at Naples as of equal or greater importance than the Ellis Island process proper.

Before we left our native land to begin the research in Italy, we were under the impression that emigration was merely a matter of so many hundreds of thousands of people traveling each season from their homes in Europe to the nearest ports, and taking third-class passage to New York, where they were landed at Ellis Island and examined. That is the American idea of it,—that and no more! That anything befell them, other than happens to traveling families in any place, before they reached Ellis Island, never occurred to us. The process of birth certificates, passports, declarations, and grouping by the numbers on the ship's manifest was all unexpected; and here at Naples was yet more

THROUGH THE CITY OF THIEVES 139

formality, and, looking back over the whole trip, the Naples stage seems really more interesting and surely as important as the Ellis Island one.

The morning (30th of September) that we arrived on the *Reina Margherita* from Messina, and debarked with our baggage at nine o'clock on the quay before the Capitaneria del Porto, with no shelter from the sun already beginning to send down rays of broiling heat and blinding whiteness, we were rallied into one crowd by agents of the North German Lloyd broker, Vincenzo di Luca fu Giacomo, who stood at the foot of the gangplank crying, "*Germanese! Germanese!*" and into another by agents of the La Veloce Line broker, who stood on the other side and called, "*Veloce! Veloce!*"

Across the quay, directly opposite where the *Reina Margherita* had docked, lay the beautiful long gray *Citta di Napoli*, ready to sail that day, and from the other side of the Capitaneria we could see emigrants who were going in her, pouring out of the examination-rooms in hundreds, and carrying their baggage aboard. All the third-class passengers among us who were going by the Veloce Line were quickly herded together, and rushed away and put through the process. As our steamer did not sail yet for two days, we were left to wait while all the Veloce baggage was passed through the custom-house, and then that of all the first class from the *Reina Margherita*, as there is a city customs duty in Naples in addition to the national revenue, and baggage is looked at very carefully for *comestibles*, or anything that can be eaten or converted into food-stuffs.

We had had no breakfast; we had had exceedingly little sleep; the air outside the bay had been chilling;

and now we were left huddled in the dust under that pouring sun till it was somebody's pleasure to remove us. A high iron fence topped with spear pickets prevented our getting out, and if we tried to go through the doorway into the Capitaneria there were policemen to push us back. Despite the strict rules of the Capitaneria concerning any Neapolitans being allowed in among third-class passengers not yet admitted to the port, or among those passed for embarkation, peddlers, water-sellers, beggars and mendicant friars began to filter through the Capitaneria and over the fence, until, even if we were oppressed with weariness, heat, dust and hunger, we at least had diversion, and were able to buy warm water with a dash of licorice in it. One buxom young woman who came in with an ollah and served all customers out of the same glass was of a fine cheery type, and when some of the people about us complained and asked whether this was what they were to expect in the way of treatment, she would laugh and say:

"Oh, do not trouble yourself because you are weak with weariness and have no place to sit down but the dust in the hot sun. This is heavenly to what you will find later on."

I heard her tell Camela and Concetta this, and the effect was anything but cheering on them. Antonio tried to comfort them, but he was almost at his wits' end, answering questions from all the members of our party as to when they were going to get something to eat, whether we were to go at once on the steamer, whether or not they looked "sick in the eyes," and might they open one of the trunks to get a bottle of wine, and so on indefinitely.

The begging friars were nearly all Franciscans, and

THROUGH THE CITY OF THIEVES 141

moved about the various enclosures among the thousands of emigrants, telling them that they could best ward off the fearful dangers of the voyage and in the new, wild land, America, by purchasing prayer-cards. They got a great deal of money in this way.

It was with keen disappointment that I saw a party of three persons, an old woman, her daughter and the daughter's small boy, who were going by the *Citta di Napoli*, brought off the *Reina Margherita* and hurried away with the other Veloce people. I had observed their diseased eyes the evening before, and had warned all of our party to keep away from them; but the young woman had made friends with one of our neighbors, to whom she confided the fact that this was her third trip to Naples with her mother and her boy. She had tried twice before to go to America, but all had been turned down on account of trachoma, and sent back to Messina, where they lived. Now, by arranging to perform that indefinite process I heard so much about, "Pay some money to some people," she fully expected to get through at Naples and to be landed in New York. I had planned to check up every step of her process and see if she really did get through with the old woman and the child; but now she was hustled away, and we were left standing helpless. I had the name she gave to our neighbor, and the address in Messina, but either the neighbor was mistaken or the name fictitious.

Soon after they had gone, an old man with a swarm of young clerks appeared, and, calling the roll of the party, issued tickets which were good for daily rations, while we were held in Naples, at the North German Lloyd's contract restaurant, the *Trattoria Retifilero* in Via Lanzeri. It was a long, tedious process, involving

142 IMPORTED AMERICANS

much argument and searching for passports, tickets and papers.

When the old man was finished, he and his henchmen marshaled the crowd, divided it off into groups amid a wild uproar, and each group of thirty or forty followed one of the young clerks into the Capitaneria, where they were led before the city customs officials, who ransacked their baggage for *comestibles*. A number of the members of our party were intensely agitated over the performance, it being their first experience, and little Nastasia, who had wine and cheese in his box, was wild with fright. He was afraid he would be arrested, or something would happen that would prevent his going.

A few times before, I had seen evidences of this fear among others of our party, and I soon realized that *what makes the emigrant so meek in the face of outrageous brutalities, so open to the wiles of sharpers, so thoroughly disconcerted and bewildered in the face of an examination, is his terrible dread of not being allowed to enter America. He would as soon think of cutting off a hand as doing anything that "would get him into trouble."*

When the city customs officials were finished with us, we were passed through to the front of the Capitaneria, and to the left, where the steamship broker's representatives were busy checking the heavy baggage. Almost the entire party was dependent on Antonio and me to worry the score of big trunks, boxes and bundles through, and, this spot being just as hot and dusty as the other side of the Capitaneria, the whole party was in a deplorable condition when at last we were ready to be led to our abiding-place for the two nights we would be in Naples.

THROUGH THE CITY OF THIEVES 143

Once outside the iron fence bounding the Capitaneria, the group largely made up of our party straggled along under the weight of their baggage, following the young clerk who piloted us along the Marina, with its turmoil of commerce, and soon we turned into the Vico di via Porta. Threading our way through the narrow street, jammed with all the life of the lower classes, we came at last to the Albergo della Rosa, or Rose Hotel, in the Lanzieri.

It is one of the many houses whose great source of income is the housing of emigrants at fixed rates of from one to two lire per night. The first floor was occupied by shops; around the entrance were gathered carts loaded with all sorts of wares from vegetables to trumpery combs, mirrors, soaps, baggage-straps,—in fact, all of the things which the poor emigrant could be led to fancy he wanted for the voyage. The house did not look very inviting, and as we hesitated a horde of runners from other houses pounced upon us and almost dragged us elsewhere. Some of our people would have gone if a respectable old gentleman passing by and hearing the commotion had not stopped and addressed us, saying, "Go to this hotel if the company sends you here, and do not take up with these thieves. Some of the places they recommend are of a most dangerous character. Emigrants are robbed there constantly."

I had firmly decided that our party should stop at the Albergo della Rosa, and contrived to persuade the others in our group not to be influenced by the importunate Neapolitans.

The host—a short, unshaven, bibulous-looking person—appeared, and we were conducted to the second and third floors, and allowed to sort ourselves out into

144 IMPORTED AMERICANS

three large rooms, filled with single beds. All of the women and children were given a front room with light and air, and the men took the others.

Here occurred an evidence of that class feeling which exists from the beggar up in Italy. There is no democracy. By a very natural process, with no words or discussion, Nunzio Giunta, Antonio Squadrito, Nicola Curro and one or two others, who considered themselves members of a better class than our farmer-boys from Socosa, for instance, took the best room, leaving the third, which was dark and close, to the others, who accepted it without a murmur. In this connection I would note an amusing thing: Antonio never carried his own baggage till he reached America, nor did he ever fail to protest when I shouldered mine. He was afraid we should lose caste in the eyes of the people we met.

It was not ten minutes after we were indoors, before every member of the party was stretched out and sound asleep, being simply exhausted by the strain under which we had been for two days.

It was nearly six o'clock when the host roused everybody to tell them that if they wished to take advantage of the one meal a day the steamship broker was paying for, they should be going to the *trattoria*.

It was a subdued party that arrayed itself, filed down the stairs, and went to its first substantial meal since noon of the day before. There was less talking done than there had been over anything since we started from Gualtieri.

At the restaurant we found some hundreds of emigrants coming and going, and others seated at the tables. For a half hour we waited until those eating made room enough for us, and then we gathered

THROUGH THE CITY OF THIEVES 145

around one of the large tables arranged about the long room, and soon were served by unkempt waiters with soup made with tomatoes and paste, a stew of meat and vegetables, the meat being from portions of the goat not the most savory, melons and wine. Poor little Ina was very hungry but very brave. She confessed, after we had all been cheered and stimulated by the meal, that she had been afraid she would "faint, and they would not let a fainty girl go to America."

Nothing was of more interest to me than the rapid broadening of the mental scope of the children and young folks in our party. Pretty Concetta, in all her sixteen years, had never been away from home before. Some of the youths had never been outside the village community of Gualtieri. Little Ina showed how bright she is and how well she had understood all the wonders that had been told her, by refusing to be appalled by the tremendous size and unheard-of splendor of Naples, for such the town, shabby and tumble-down as it is in the parts they had visited, seemed to them. She took her new experiences as a matter of course.

We walked out into the city after supper, and Concetta was as nearly like a wild, frightened animal of the forest as anything of which I can think. As I knew the city well, I piloted them to the portions where there would be the most interesting sights in the sunset hours and the early evening. As we were crossing the Piazza Borsa, with its busy traffic and many speeding electric cars, she clung to Camela's arm, and Camela clung to my wife. The passing horses and cars seemed to utterly bewilder them, and when we were little more than halfway across, Camela and Concetta broke into a wild run, and, despite my wife's resistance,

140 IMPORTED AMERICANS

dragged her the remainder of the way to the sidewalk, the last spurt being directly in front of a Toretta train. When we were all safely assembled on the sidewalk, Giovanni Pulcinella, himself trembling all over, turned to me and said :

"Oh, all this noise makes my head as big as my body. Let us go back to the house."

In one of the little side streets **Camela** suddenly stopped with an exclamation of disgust, and pointed to some boys with a plate of macaroni. They were shoveling it into their mouths with their fingers in the fashion that is met with only in Naples.

After we had passed through the splendid business arcade, the **Galleria Umberto**, had seen the Royal Palace and other wonders, we came suddenly to a little street which has a peculiar reputation in Naples. It is the **Vicolo del Pallanetto**. Many years ago, when both the **Mafia** and **Camorra** were flourishing institutions in Italy, some strange things happened in this street.

It is so steep that it is paved with stones set like stairs, and many are the dead who have been found there at dawn. Now the street is inhabited for the most part with honest people of the Neapolitan brand of that virtue, and it has the distinction of having sent great numbers of street-primo Italians to America. "The dago with the monkey" was the pioneer of Italian emigration to the United States ; then came the lemon-seller, who took to the banana and peanut business. Some people take it as a matter of course that bananas and peanuts have their home in Italy. An Italian fruit-vender whom I know tells me he has people ask him nearly every day whether he has any Italian bananas. The truth is that both bananas and peanuts



The Storied Vicolo del Pallonetto in Naples

24 MAY 1966

THROUGH THE CITY OF THIEVES 147

are as rare in Italy as alligator pears in New York. Several house-owners in this street are retired hand-organ players who have made substantial fortunes in America in other years.

As we came through the street with our trailing, staring, interested party, scores of persons with relatives in America came out of the houses or called down from the balconies, desiring that we look up their friends in the States and take them messages. Lest some who read these lines may find in them fresh cause to raise the Mafia bugaboo, I will repeat an earlier assertion: while it is no use denying that once the Mafia was a large, well-organized and most murderous society, and that for a long period it built up a record of atrocious crimes, extortions coupled with murders, the stringent measures adopted in Italy have suppressed it so effectually that actual Mafia members are only a few middle-aged or old men, who keep their allegiance only for fear of their old comrades. No man dares raise his voice to-day and call himself "*Mafite*" except in America, and here the man who does it is a common criminal, trading on the terrors of the old bloody band.

This country was greatly roused over the operations of a secret society in New Orleans, and much was written and said about the Mafia at the time. It is true some of the men were old *Mafiti*, but I have the word of an Italian secret-service official of high rank that the band was a purely independent organization. About a year ago a terrible murder was committed by Italians in New York, and there was not one of the great leading dailies and the reviewing periodicals but pronounced it an outbreak of a Mafia band. A number of men were arrested, with strong proof against them,

148 IMPORTED AMERICANS

and they were labeled "The Band," and connections with other Mafia bands sought for in Buffalo, Chicago, New Orleans, and elsewhere. Very serious editors discussed "the growth of the Mafia in America" and "the frightful influx of criminal Italians." The whole had considerable influence on the Shattuc bill. The truth of the matter is that "The Band" was merely a small gang of counterfeiters, most of them men of such undesirable qualities that they would never have been able to gain admission to the Mafia; and they were no more *Mafiti*, strictly speaking, than are the members of the American Board of Foreign Missions. I repeat, "the Mafia in America" is nothing but a bugaboo. Men who belong to small criminal gangs used the word as a means of extortion, and the mysterious murders which happen frequently—always with Italians as the victims—are private vendettas. When we consider that the Sicilian considers it just as much his inherent right to stab a man who has done him a great wrong as the American Southerner to lynch a negro who has turned beast, and that criminal Italians in America work astounding injustices on their gullible countrymen, it is a wonder that there are not more mysterious murders than there are. The deportation from America of about six shiploads of Italian parasites who live on the labor of their fellows would put an end to all such things in this country. The average Italian living in America would rather go to prison for five or ten years than be deported. And many an Italian gladly goes to prison to be maintained while he learns a trade and how to read and write English.

It seemed strange indeed to be leading a company of honest country folk along a street so noted for its dark crimes, but in the hearty greetings and hospitality of the

THROUGH THE CITY OF THIEVES 149

people about us in the Pallonetto there was no sign of the blackness of that other day.

It was most amusing when I piled the whole crowd on a car bound out toward Possilipo, past the villas on the northern rim of the wonderful bay. I had let many cars go by till I saw one coming that was nearly empty, and when we were all in we nearly filled it. The boys all wanted to sit together. They were in high glee, and crowded nine into one seat, to the dismay of the conductor and the entertainment of the other passengers. The conductor stopped the car and straightened them out, distributing them into empty places. When the car was going at full speed I looked back and saw that every one was holding on to the seat for dear life, and watching Antonio and myself anxiously to see if we gave any sign that we were in danger. Having occasion to change cars, Concetta and Camela lost their heads and sprang upon the other car while it was still in motion. Antonio and the conductor caught them and lifted them up, or else one or the other would certainly have been hurt. If our people were so overwhelmed by life in Naples I wondered what they would do in New York. However, before this evening trip was over, and we went back to the Albergo della Rosa, my wife and I both remarked a change that had come over all, especially the younger ones. It was one of the first displays of their adaptability,—one of the best characteristics of the Italians now pouring into America. In a few hours they had got a fine grasp on city ways, and the people we brought back to the emigrant lodging-house behaved far differently from those we had taken away. The wild look was gone from Concetta's eyes, and only in the roar of Broadway did I see it again.

150 IMPORTED AMERICANS

There is no part of southern Italy where the flea is not a bloodthirsty brigand, but in Naples he seems to partake of the characteristics of the city and is clever, wily, bold, and—oh! so numerous. In the *Albergo della Rosa*, that night, it really seemed that the vermin of southern Europe, brought to the lodging-house by emigrants from all lands, had assembled for an international clinic, and we were the subjects. If that great man who makes animals talk in his books had only been there, he would have heard the Grecian bedbug telling the Russian Jew louse that he and the Syrian sand-gnat had just had a choice nip of raw American that had been pointed out to him by the Calabrese fleas who were first-cousins of their hosts the Neapolitans.

Some beast of the night had bitten little Ina on the right eyelid, and when we arose in the morning the eye was almost closed.

CHAPTER XII

ROGUERY AND ILLITERACY

BRIGHT and early I set about contriving some method of getting out of Italy in the guise I wished. I could not get an Italian passport in Naples, for the same reason I could not get one in Gualtieri. I could not get a birth certificate in the municipality, for the very good reason that I had not been born there. Yet I must have a passport, either Italian or American, if I wished to be allowed to go aboard the *Prinzessin Irene* as a third-class passenger. If I desired that my wife and I should travel first-class no questions would be asked us by anybody, either in Naples or New York. That would ruin my chain of investigation. I must go in the steerage, and I must go through Ellis Island. With American credentials I would leave the *Prinzessin Irene* at the docks in New York, which I did not desire to do, and without the credentials I could not get on board the ship. It was truly a puzzling situation. I sounded first the underground methods, of which I will have more to say later, and found that they were too dangerous to my work. Then I decided to go aboard as an American and get off as an Italian, and to go aboard as an American I must go to the consulate, make application for a passport, and then, having been properly identified, hurry to the American embassy in Rome and get the passport, a paper which only the ambassador can issue.

152 IMPORTED AMERICANS

The American consul in Naples is A. Homer Byington, a name famous among journalists from Maine to California; and, going to the consulate, I made a clean breast of the whole affair to Mr. Homer M. Byington, his vice-consul.

"It is a shame to let a good story fall down," said he. "Wait till I can get Mr. St. Ledger, our vice-consul, on the docks, and we will see what can be done."

In half an hour I had the assurance that Com. Aillo, chief officer at the Capitaneria, would allow me to pass without a passport, Mr. St. Ledger being my sponsor.

I had yet to buy our tickets, and, going to the offices of Vincenzo di Luca fu Giacomo, the North German Lloyd broker, the man who handles all the third-class passengers, I applied for a ticket, and was refused because I had no passport, as the law under which the government selects the brokers of emigrants' tickets strictly forbids a ticket being sold to an emigrant unless he has a passport.

The Barcelona sub-agent of the La Veloce broker at Messina was caught sending over-aged emigrants overland from Italy to Bremen and Hamburg, whence they embarked for the United States, and was arrested and given a term of imprisonment. He had been smuggling across the northern border persons refused passports because of age and the likelihood of their being returned to Italy from Ellis Island. One party lost a trunk and wrote back from Hamburg about it, and, the whole plot thus revealed, the arrests followed.

The court of last resort was Mr. Nicolo Padolfino, in charge of the Neapolitan broker's department of declarations, and by assiduous efforts I got his ear and

ROGUERY AND ILLITERACY 153

took him into my confidence. I began to feel that if I kept on at this rate there would be few officials in the region but would know all about my doings, and my opportunities would be correspondingly limited. Many things transpired but — I emerged from the fray with the third-class tickets that would land my wife and myself in Ellis Island—all of which goes to show how difficult it is for an emigrant to leave Italy without all of his papers being straight from his native village or town, on up to the last gate at Naples. During a previous stay in Naples I had heard of a school in the Via St. Sebastian which coached illiterate and ignorant emigrants sufficiently to ensure their being passed at Ellis Island. Now I heard of yet another, and, looking them up, found that they had the moral support if not the financial assistance of the Italian Bureau of Emigration and the Emigrant Congress, which had just finished meeting at Udine. All this sounded very interesting and seemed to have its startling features, but a little further investigation showed me that while their intents are bad enough for the interests of the United States, their achievements are not at all dangerous. While these places are anxious to coach up undesirable emigrants and get them out of the country, the foolish, unappreciative emigrant refuses to come to the schools to be coached. If ever these schools should be again "discovered," I hope that the seeker for truth will learn the whole truth and have a good laugh over it.

At this point a word should be said about the Emigrant Congress. It is one of those highly public-spirited societies, that delights in its annual session and the attendant junketing, the speeches that "view with alarm" conditions which statistics show to exist, and,

154 IMPORTED AMERICANS

having appointed a committee to attend to the readjustment of this and that particular phase of national life, passes resolutions, adjourns only to meet again another year, and hear to what extent the committee has annoyed truly businesslike statesmen. The Udine session was just such a one. Some of the speeches made showed a ridiculous lack of knowledge of American conditions. The proceedings lie before me as I write, and they certainly are most futile. I am glad they are. Here, with occasional bracketed insertions to lighten passages which are obscure even in a very liberal translation, are the resolutions adopted:

On the topic of organization of the emigrants the insertion in "the order of the day," moved by "Congressman" Cabrini and carried, was:

"This assembly considers that a professional [formed by salaried organizers] organization open to all laboring men, without political or religious prejudice, is one of the very soundest methods of ameliorating the economic conditions, both moral and intellectual, of the laboring classes: holding that it is indispensable to the formation of a feeling of fraternal cordiality in the country, the control of the temporary emigration, the organization of the poor artisans; furthermore contending that for the assistance of the emigrants it is necessary that an organization of all Italian operatives consider the importance of all this and pray the Honorable Secretary of Emigration to instruct at all times, more than in the past, their leader's actions."

On the topic of educating the emigrant so that he may avoid being barred because of illiteracy, and may not be victimized by the *patrone* system, Professor Frescura introduced the following:

ROGUERY AND ILLITERACY 155

"All are in accord as to the necessity for instructing the emigrant. But be it held that the programme presented by Professor Galeno [a noted philanthropist who recommended that special schools with government-paid teachers be established], though splendid, is too vast. It is far better that there should come about a modification of those schools which we already have."

When a lawyer named Cossattini had amended to increase the pay of the teachers in the districts where help was most needed, and "Congressman" Giradini had amended that instruction vary according to the exigencies of emigration, the Frescura resolution was passed.

In the matter of temporary emigration the Congress merely followed the lead of Professor Levi-Morenos, who was a member also of the International Agricultural Congress at Rome in May, 1903, in which it was bewailed that German and other ships were sharing so much Italian traffic back and forth between Italy and North and South America, and that so many emigrants were returning broken in health and injured. There was a lively row over contract labor of temporary emigrants. We are accustomed to think that our very stringent contract-labor laws are successfully excluding aliens under contract, but debate in the Congress would lead one to think the laws had merely made the *patrones* more powerful by making "smuggled" alien labor more valuable to American corporations.

In the matter of the "mediazione" of labor, or "bureauizing" it, as it were, to avoid the necessity or opportunity for *patrones*, or, as they are referred to by real sociologists of the first water on the other side, *sfruttratori*, a lively debate brought out some sharp

ROGUERY AND ILLITERACY 157

sympathy than in print. A thoroughly American newspaper printed in Italian would be a blessing in both New York and Boston.

The evening before the day we were to go aboard, we went for a trip outside the city to get a little rest and recreation before encountering the ordeal of going through the Capitaneria and embarking. I saw by the roadside a party of emigrants from one of the villages back of Naples, who were driving in with huge carts, and had stopped, possibly for the night. They were the poorest that I had yet seen, and two old women, whom I observed, I felt sure would be refused by the doctors on their general physical condition.

On our way home we changed cars in the San Ferdinando, and as we stood waiting I noticed an evil-looking "bravo-like" sort of a chap eyeing me closely, and I moved away from the remainder of the party in order to see if he would approach me. I found I was right in my estimate of him. He evidently took me for a returned emigrant with good American dollars in my pocket, for he came over, walked along slowly behind me, slapped me on the shoulder, and said in English,—

"Hello, John!"

"Che?" I answered, feigning stupidity and half-recognition as I turned toward him.

Then he came out with the old, old, very old confidence game. He asked me where he had seen me last. I surmised it was in Pittsburg; and he was at once sure it was, and we chatted on in Italian, or rather I answered merely enough to keep my lingual discrepancies from being observed. Just then another of his sort came along and inquired the way to a near-by street, showing a fifty-lire note, and saying he had

158 IMPORTED AMERICANS

been sent by a man to deliver it, and was so unfamiliar with Naples he had lost his way. Thief Number One winked at me and said in English:

"Come on, John, we get dat moneys."

"How?" said I.

Thief Number Two was staring around at the buildings to give Thief Number One full chance with me. This worthy made a quick sign of playing cards. I saw the car approaching which I wanted our people to take, and so, to end matters, I turned him "the sign of the thumb,"¹ a signal of the freemasonry of thieves which I had picked up long before in the Italian quarter in New York, and at it the words died on his lips. The other man caught it too, and his eyes got very wide with surprise, then suddenly narrowed and darkened. Both responded with lightning-like signals that were so near to natural movements of the right hand that if both had not done it I would not have known it was a signal, and when I could not respond in kind they darted away as if from sudden death.

If I had gone with Number One in the first place to try to fleece Number Two, there would have been another case for the Naples police of the "mysterious disappearance" of a returned emigrant. I could not long have concealed my nationality, and that might perhaps have saved me.

¹The sign of the thumb is a quick motion of the hand by turning the whole hand palm up, fingers half closed and thumb out. It is a very general sign of suspicion of a third party or of confidence between two.

CHAPTER XIII

THE EMBARKATION PROCESS

IN the morning we were up early, and after a very indifferent breakfast got our hand luggage together and departed from the Albergo della Rosa. At the door we were beset by fruit-venders with their long barrows, and small tradesmen with all sorts of trifles that they convinced our people were indispensable on the voyage; and I really believe that between the lodging-house and the steamship-broker's offices that portion of the party which lagged behind where I could not control them bought forty or fifty lire worth of stuff that was worse than useless, being merely a burden and a care.

At the steamship-broker's offices an enormous crowd was gathered. Two thirds of them had no real occasion to go there, but if one member of a party was not right in his papers, or imagined he was not, all the party went with him to avoid being separated. We had some baggage checks to see about. It seemed that there was not one hour of our journey from Gualtieri to our American destination which was not embittered by the mishaps of that baggage, and as I write, months after, some of it is still missing. I have had thoughts about it that were deeper than the greatest depths of profanity, and more far-reaching than the extent of the combined English and Italian languages in blasphemous reference.

160 IMPORTED AMERICANS

We passed down the Vico di Via Porta and along the Marina, a veritable tumult of sailing-day traffic.

A highly picturesque *carreta* loaded with emigrants and their friends on their way to the Capitaneria from their country home came jogging by and paused long enough to be kodaked.

Near the railroad tracks we came upon a group that was both laughable and pathetic. It was one of the places of sudden and forced sale of household effects of emigrants. Some of the foolish people will bring, even from provinces more distant than the Campania, quantities of household goods, furniture, etc., and their hearts are almost broken when they find they cannot take it aboard. They have felt sure that there must be some little corner on such a big ship in which they can place a half-dozen two-hundred-years-old hand-made chairs, or a five-foot bureau, or so small a matter as a table large enough to accommodate a family of the usual Italian size. However, here was a pile of it, heaped up indiscriminately, and about and on it were beggars who had bargained to look after it, or owners who had decided to remain and guard their own.

When we arrived within the iron enclosure of the Capitaneria we found that the first thing to demand attention was of course the baggage. It was already getting hot, and the large space of open, unsheltered dust in front of the Capitaneria was strewn with luggage of all shapes and sizes. There were huge wooden chests, bundles of bedclothes and blankets, casks of wine, kegs of olives, and cheese and butter, and quantities of small bags like my own. All such were already tumbling to pieces, being but cloth and paper pasted over frail wooden frames, and made on purpose to be sold to emigrants at ten times their value.

THE EMBARKATION PROCESS 161

Men went about selling grass ropes with which to tie them up.

First of all we had to get the baggage together and separate the hand baggage from the hold baggage; then the latter must all be opened up before the American consular agent and inspected, numbered, and listed; next inspected by the port health authorities; then received and receipted for by the company's agents; and what with wild efforts of the emigrants to go backward through the process, to get shut trunks that had been opened and shaken up in inspection, and to get through before the steamer should leave, it was a scene to wring a man's soul. If any of our party had any trouble, they came to Antonio or to me with it. Antonio went about holding his head as if he was afraid it would burst, and all the emigrants about us kept an eye on the big ship; not due to sail for hours yet, as if they were afraid to see it start off, like a train, at any moment.

This section of the toil and turmoil being over at last, we found that we had to carry our encumbrances to the south side of the Capitaneria and embark on a small steamer which would take us over to the fumigating-station, half a mile across the harbor, on the breakwater. It was an hour before we were properly assembled at this embarkation point, and the women were already almost succumbing to the dust and heat.

The little steamers were not much more than barges with donkey-engine power in them, and emigrants and baggage were piled in till it seemed they would swamp the craft. The men in charge of the boats knocked the emigrants about in a shameful fashion, without regard to their being men, women, or children, and

162 IMPORTED AMERICANS

the fear of "getting into trouble" caused the emigrants to take it all without resentment.

I observed many emigrants who had come to the point for embarkation on these little steamers, taking their baggage back without going to the fumigating-station, and a little careful watching showed me that certain furtive Neapolitans were directing them. The little groups paused a moment just outside the door of the police station in the south side of the Capitaneria and then hurried on around to the north side with the baggage.

I purposely put myself in the way of one of the sneaking Neapolitans and asked some question concerning the baggage.

"You do not need to go over there for fumigation and inspection if you do not want to," he said.

"Is that so? How can we avoid it?"

"I know some men who will put on the labels that they put on over there, and no one will know you have not been there."

I thought best to call Antonio to engineer the deal by which I hoped to trap this gang, which I could see must be counterfeiting official seals. He went aside with the Neapolitan, and soon turned away shaking his head. I called to him and asked what was the trouble. He said the Neapolitan wanted fifty lire for our eleven pieces of hand baggage. The other had already gone. I told Antonio to offer him twenty and I would pay it. Antonio offered fifteen and the Neapolitan accepted.

Soon a man I had not seen before appeared and beckoned to us, and we toiled with our loads over to the south side of the Capitaneria, set our baggage down in a row against the building, and in an instant a cor-



At the Doorway of the Capitaneria—Author's Party on
the Quay

050 75844



THE EMBARKATION PROCESS 163

don of guards, four in number, was stationed about us. They came out of the crowd like summoned spirits. No words passed. A fifth man appeared, and with lightning-like rapidity affixed to the baggage, by lifting up the tacked ends of straps, or prying open the tiny lead billets themselves, little metal seals impressed with the seal of the Italian government. It was the work of but a few seconds, interrupted once by the appearance of a pompous uniformed police officer who walked right by the baggage without noticing anything unusual in progress. The guards had given a quick signal as he appeared, and the groups seemed most ordinary. A sixth man appeared with a paste-brush and some little red labels. With one movement only he pasted each piece of baggage, and a seventh man, following him, affixed some large yellow labels bearing the United States consular seal. The eighth man was the one I had first seen; he appeared to be the *capo* or chief of the gang.

Meanwhile I had made careful mental notes of the eight men. I was determined to get some or all of them into the proper hands. As soon as they were through they all hurried away, mingling with the crowd without waiting for their pay. That seemed odd.

We carried our baggage around to the other side of the Capitaneria, and there stood the eighth man, really the best dressed of the lot, and signed to us to put our baggage inside a gate where two policemen were on guard, without going to a stand where men in the service of the United States consular service were pasting on genuine yellow labels on such baggage as had been over to the fumigating-station.

As we passed our baggage through the gate a boy

164 IMPORTED AMERICANS

marked each piece with a number, gave us a check, and it was all piled in rows on the ground, inside the fence, under police guard.

Straightening up with a sigh of relief at having passed the danger line so far as the fraudulent baggage was concerned, and free from our encumbrances for a while at least, I found the eighth man at my elbow. He said we must now go and be vaccinated. This was something I did not care about, nor did my wife. We each needed both arms in good condition for some time to come, but as I looked at my health ticket I saw there was a space on the back where there must be the vaccination stamp.

"For a lire I will tell you how to keep from getting a sore arm," said the thief beside me. I gave him the lire.

"When the doctor vaccinates you, rub your shirt sleeve down over the two scratched places quickly; then suck them. He will not stop you."

In the middle of the open rough lot, very similar to half-ploughed ground, which lay out beyond the Capitaneria fence, stood a small building with a big door. Crowds of emigrants were struggling around it. Venders of water-ice, lemons, fruit, etc., were in the midst of the crowd, holding their stands with one hand to keep them from being knocked over while they dealt out wares, made change, and talked with the other.

When we had fought our way inside at last, the crowd that was let in with us took seats all around the room in a row. Three doctors sat on a raised dais at one side. One did the vaccinating, the others the clerical end of the work. I believe they took turns. The moment we entered, the vaccinating doctor

THE EMBARKATION PROCESS 165

caught sight of my wife, and, advancing politely, addressed her in German. He thought her an Austrian, and afterward confessed that he believed her to be a Moravian missionary. He was a very amiable sort of fellow, with a fine education, both general and professional, I should judge.

With a gallantry which might not have been so effusive if he had suspected that she had a husband present, he vaccinated my wife first, and she removed the virus with haste.

At the sight of the fierce-looking old man putting down the bared point of steel on my wife's bare arm the women shrieked and the children began to cry. Little Anastasia made a break for the door, but a guard blocked his exit. Others fought to get out. The other doctors reassured them; and after much difficulty all in the room were vaccinated, every member of our party following the advice of the thief. Concetta was as white as milk from fright and horror.

Outside, the thief informed us that we would not be required to go back to the Capitaneria just yet, but I did not believe him until I had asked one of the guards, for I mistrusted the thief because he had not asked for the pay for the job done by the gang. Now he asked us to leave the vicinity of the Capitaneria and go to a nice place with him to get something to eat. I refused, and then he demanded his money. If we had gone with him he would have put up some game that would have wrung a few lire from us at least, and, if we had been as stupid as his usual victims, perhaps all that we had. He not only demanded the amount agreed upon, but three times as much. He threatened to get us arrested for having fraudulent labels on our baggage. Antonio was scared to the rigidity of a

poker, and all the others were trembling like leaves. But his bluff was not equal to American *aplomb*, and in a few minutes he went off with ten lire and no more. I knew we would have no trouble from him, and was anxious to get rid of him so as to be able to communicate with the American consul and secure the arrests I had in mind.

Even though the *capo* had left us, I observed that we were duly watched, and, try as I would, I could not get a message away unobserved. I could not leave the party myself, nor could I send any of them, they being strange to the city. I began to despair.

It was now time to return to the Capitaneria for the final examination, and to go aboard if we passed. I knew I should see St. Ledger there, but it might be too late.

We made our way in at the front entrance, and were compelled to stand for a long time in the crowd. There the *capo* joined us once more. He had shed his ill humor as a snake sheds its skin. One of the boys brought to me the report of a case in which I was interested. It was that of Mrs. Vincenzo Tortora, a woman who had been in New York and lived with her husband at No. 3 Elizabeth Street, and had returned to visit her home in a village back of Naples. She had with her a two-and-a-half-year old boy born in the United States. Some time before, she had endeavored to return to the States, but the doctors had refused to allow her to do so because the child had contracted trachoma. I saw the woman and talked with her, and found that she had come down to Naples to see the "underground men," who had agreed to put her through for 300 lire. They had told her to go back, that she could not go on a North German Lloyd steamer,

THE EMBARKATION PROCESS 167

but must go by a certain line when they sent for her. While I was talking to her the *capo* came over, having heard the boy who had reported the case to me telling Antonio about it, and he assured the woman that if she had come twenty-four hours sooner he would have sent her over on the *Prinzessin Irene* for 100 lire.

I drew him into talk about the underground system for diseased emigrants, and he said that there were doctors in Naples who could so relieve trachoma in forty-eight hours that if the emigrant kept up the treatment he or she could get by the doctors at New York or Boston. The eyes would be worse than before after the treatment was stopped, and, if continued too long, would cause blindness. Those emigrants who could not be doctored up temporarily were sent through, however.

"How sent through?"

For answer a shrug of the shoulders and—"Oh, pay some money to some people!" Always that evasive, baffling answer.

However, having heard of the system in Messina, on the steamer, and in the city of Naples, and now seeing such palpable signs of it right in the shelter of the Capitaneria, I began for the first time to believe what I could scarcely credit before,—that the "gold-paved avenue" leading into my beautiful, healthy home country, for the loathsomely and contagiously diseased, did exist. I set on foot at that point some investigations not yet ripe, and I may never harvest them; but if I do not some one else will sooner or later "get on the inside." I shall later prove beyond a doubt that there is a door for diseased aliens.

Another flagrant abuse which I should mention here was that of supposed bankers' agents inducing emi-

168 IMPORTED AMERICANS

grants to buy New York drafts for the safety of their money. One man was going about cautioning the emigrants to invest in drafts, and another followed him offering drafts. The first man came up to me, after some of our boys had been approached by him and had referred him to me.

"Who are you?" I asked, feigning stupidity.

"The chief of police," he said,—and I laughed in his face.

However, many were caught in the scheme, among them a boy I had taken an interest in, a lad named Salvatore Biajo, bound for St. Louis. He had 100 lire in gold and eight in silver, and bought a draft. The draft was all right, being on the Bank of Naples, but the man who sold it to him, instead of making it for 108 lire minus a few centesimi for discount, put it in dollars, writing in only \$19 when it should have been about \$21.35 according to Post & Flagg's Ellis Island rate. The gang of draft-sellers made two dollars off young Biajo, and if they made as much off the hundreds of others who bought, they did a fine day's business.

At last we were ready to move on, and, still accompanied by our thieving friend, who evidently wanted to see me safe where he thought I could do him no harm, and where I might pay him a little more for valuable information, we entered the great north pen in the Capitaneria, where emigrants in hundreds were standing, with their passports out, in a solid mass held back by police, who peeled off the front row from right to left, then back again; and we filed across the room to a door in the corner where was the American staff, the port doctor, the surgeons on duty for the United States Marine Hospital Corps, the ship's surgeon, and some others.

THE EMBARKATION PROCESS 169

We were examined; our eyelids were turned up for trachoma; our heads rubbed over for favus; any defective-looking parts of the body touched for hidden disease; and every now and then a man, woman, or child would be told to stand aside for further examination, and a wail would go up from the group to which that one belonged. It was as if a touch of death had come among them.

I saw one old man who had taken his wife and widowed daughter with her two children, sold all his little property, and was starting for America to open up a little business of some sort, pulled out of the line, examined for some spinal trouble, and turned down. The family could not go without him, so they were all turned back. There were two or three other cases like that, which happened there before my eyes. Last year we turned back over 20,000, including dependent relatives, at our ports and borders. They should never have been allowed to leave home. That is where our system is wrong. The emigrant should not be selected at the port of arrival, nor at the port of embarkation, but by a small visiting itinerant board that should come to him in his home community. We would thus get none of the bad and lose none of the good, and a hundred outrages would be avoided. The fuller argument I hope to give with the light of facts yet to be told.

When we appeared at the bar of the police official who inspects all passports, I made our presence known to Mr. St. Ledger, and after a word from him to the official we were passed, went by the place where the police were taking weapons from suspected bad men, and out into the enclosure where our baggage was. Against the fence I saw the face of the *capo* of the gang of thieves and counterfeiters.

170 IMPORTED AMERICANS

Under a pretext I got the party halted, re-entered the building, followed by the perplexed St. Ledger, and, when inside, where the thieves' sentinels could not see, I unfolded the plot I had discovered.

In a word, before the ship sailed I had the pleasure of seeing the *capo* and two others in the hands of detectives, and the others would have been captured had not the port doctor, the instant he was informed of it, rushed up to me in full view outside in the baggage enclosure, followed by half a dozen officers, and at the sight the thieves flew like birds.

The port doctor refused to allow our baggage to go aboard, as it was fraudulently passed; but in the end I got it into his dull head that if he did as he threatened, kept us there to testify, and held our baggage for evidence, he would not get any testimony from us; and when sufficient consular pressure had been brought to bear to show him that we had been parties to the fraud in order to catch the counterfeiters and make the case, he relinquished his hold on us and our belongings. We found sixty-eight other pieces of baggage, with the fraudulent labels on, in the enclosure. They could be told by a slight imperfection in the red labels. The yellow counterfeits of the United States seals were perfect.

At last we were free to go aboard.

CHAPTER XIV

THE VOYAGE

STRUGGLING up the steep incline of the gang-plank, set from the masonry of the quay of the Capitaneria of the port of Naples to the gap in the railing of the after deck of the *Prinzessin Irene*, came hundreds of men, women, and children, one and all weighted with luggage. Some staggered under the weight of great cloth-wrapped bundles; others lugged huge valises by the grass ropes which kept them from bursting open because of their flimsy construction; and even the tots carried fibre-baskets of fruit, straw-cased flasks of wine, cheese forms looped with string, and small rush-bottomed chairs for deck sitting, bought on the quay for twenty cents each, or home-made ones from the villages.

There were people of all the bloods of southern Europe, though the southern Italian predominated in the shipload, just as they predominate in every shipload from Mediterranean and even from French ports at times. His nose and upper lip wrinkled up with too much sunlight, there came an Oriental youth, nominally a Turk, probably a hybrid, and in addition to a fez and a pair of yellow slippers his array was naught but an embroidered jacket and a pair of voluminous silk trousers. I found myself wondering what the temperature in New York would be on the 14th of October, the day we were due.

172 IMPORTED AMERICANS

If one looked carefully there were to be seen twenty different sorts of costumes of the *contadini*. The Tuscan, the Trans-teveran, the Calabrese, the Sicilian, indeterminate Swiss, Genovese, and so on; and sprinkled thickly through the lot was a cheap attempt at the European mode. The women were to be found wearing their head-dresses much more frequently than the men. The male contingent seemed to have had enough money to buy for each a new cap or hat. Here and there was to be seen an emigrant attired in the best style of Rome, and, despite the heat of the late afternoon, wearing a heavy cape overcoat. Some few were barefooted, and others showed that they had come down to Naples dressed just as they did at their every-day labor. Altogether it was a motley assemblage, and nine babies out of every ten came aboard crying. I feel convinced that a portion of these never ceased until the voyage was over.

The most notable feature was the ease with which one could detect that every seventh or eighth person had been to America before, and now had gathered around him a group of from two to thirty friends, relatives, and neighbors, going over in his care, just as our party was going in the care of Antonio Squadrito and myself. When the steerage passengers had all been herded on, the late-coming first-cabin voyagers arrived, and the crowd of friends outside the iron fence was admitted to the quay.

It chanced that a piece of baggage belonging to Genino was missing, and I was by the gangway aft, keeping an eye out for it, and ready to tip a porter to bring it on. It was one of those which had been fraudulently passed, and the doctor of the port was minded to hold it for evidence. Just before I spied it, a woman

standing just behind me said in English so plainly that she knew I could hear, but never dreamed that I understood:

"These dirty, repulsive creatures really seem to show traces of the finer feelings; do you not think so, Agnes? See that old man,—yes, the two other old men with him, down there on the dock, looking up at those people over there. I should think it was a family going over. See them wave their hands and throw kisses, and see the tears running down their faces. As I told my husband when we came over, some of them are far less heavy and embruted than one would think to look at them."

I regret to say that woman is the daughter of a noted Philadelphia clergyman, and her husband is an employer of many hundreds of these seemingly "embruted" creatures.

As soon as ever I could be perfectly sure that all of our party from Gualtieri-Sicamino and the newest additions to our group from Potenza, Avellino, Scilla, etc., were all aboard, and that none of the baggage had been left behind, I went forward through the alley-way that led between the galley, bakery, blacksmith shop, and the cooks' and petty officers' quarters, to the forward deck, where a terrific hubbub was in progress. The thousand and more persons there, with their baggage heaped about the deck, were all talking and all endeavoring to do something which mad, wild impulse bade them attempt. It was turmoil and tumult, and what made matters worse was that two of the forward hatches were open, and late cargo was being heaved in as fast as six derricks could do it. The slings with a ton or two in each would come swinging and crashing over the side, and a half-dozen men by shouts,

174 IMPORTED AMERICANS

oaths, and blows kept the bewildered emigrants from crossing the danger-spaces between the ports in the railings and the hatches.

Our party was scattered all about. Little Nastasia I found perched in a perilous nook in the shrouds, eating a musk-melon down to the hard skin, as happy as he could be. My wife, knowing that the first thing to look out for was the best sleeping location, had taken Camela Squadrito and her little daughter Ina, and Concetta Fomica, below into the women's compartment; so Giovanni Pulejo informed me; and, leaving Antonio Squadrito to round up the men and get them and their baggage below into the second men's compartment, it being the best ventilated, I knew,—I plunged below to take advantage of the confusion and secure a section of beds for the women and children nearest amidships, on account of it being steadier there in rough weather, and near the port-holes for air and light.

I could barely get down the big double companion-way, so choked was it with women, children, and baggage, and when I did succeed I found my wife and her charges huddled on top of Camela's bundles, waiting in despair for order to come out of chaos. On every hand were screaming babies and shouting women, with a few men going about as if mad; and at the approaches to the beds were dirty, heavy-handed steerage stewards, who refused to allow the women to take beds until they were sorted out according to their numbers on the ship's manifest and the numbers on each bed. I saw at a glance that that would be a work of half the night, and I asked him why they were so particular. He answered that "a company inspector was aboard this trip."

However, in a few minutes I observed that a Gen-

ovese approached him, and, after a moment's parley, gave him a five-lire note, and was allowed with all his people to take the choice of the locations. Despite his dread of the inspector, he could not resist my money also, and in five minutes I had the women of our party in the most secluded corner, where they could get both light and air, that was to be found in the place.

In a compartment from nine to ten feet high and having a space no larger than six ordinary-sized rooms, were beds for 195 persons, and 214 women and children occupied them. The ventilation was merely what was to be had from the companion-way that opened into the alley-way, and not on the deck, the few ports in the ship's sides, and the scanty ventilating shafts.

The beds were double-tiered affairs in blocks of from ten to twenty, constructed of iron framework, with iron slats set in checker fashion to support the burlap-covered bag of straw, grass, or waste which served as a mattress. Pillows there were none, only cork-jacket life-preservers stuck under one end of the pseudo-mattress to give the elevation of a pillow. As each emigrant had passed through the alley-way to come forward when boarding the ship, he or she had been given a blanket as the storeroom door was passed. This blanket served the purpose of all bedclothing, and any other use to which the emigrant might be forced to put it. In material it was a mixture of wool, cotton, and jute, with the latter predominant. In extent it was the length of a man's body and a little over a yard and a half wide. For such quarters and accommodations as I have described the emigrant pays half the sum that would buy a first-class passage. A com-

176 IMPORTED AMERICANS

parison of the two classes shows where the steamship company makes the most money.

As soon as ever the women were settled I made my way up and forward through the mob to the men's compartment, where I found my 183 sleeping-companions already busily engaged in stowing their hand baggage, getting their new shoes off their blistered feet, changing their fine raiment for old clothes for ship wear, on the advice of those who had crossed the ocean before, or twanging away on guitar or mandolin and thumping the tambourine.

The great ship was to have left her dock at five o'clock; but it was after six, and cargo was still coming aboard. The sun filtering through the red haze of the west turned the dull blue of Vesuvius to purple, and the cream of the line of the city's expanse was touched with pink. As I came on deck into the babel after seeing all the men allotted into beds, the scene about was one of extreme beauty. With the wonderfully colored background I have mentioned, put hurrying small steamers and harbor boats in the middle distance, and for the centre of the composition of your picture behold the enormous bulk of the steamer, her decks black with humanity, and clustered about the sides scores of bumboats selling melons, *fico-indias*, ship-slippers, caps, mirrors, razors, brushes, candy, wine, shawls, seasickness charms, toothache and stomach-ache medicine, knives, pipes, and numberless other things which the childish-minded emigrant imagines are necessary to life aboard ship.

At last the whistle blew, the American vice-consul went ashore with his official papers, the lighters cast off, the ports in the railing were closed, and the after gangplank withdrawn. Then the screw began its

slow thrashing, and soon we slid out by the light on the end of the breakwater, leaving behind a dim vision of a city of rose and white towers clasped in bold hills with artificed faces that heaved up and rolled backward until lost in the bosom of the night rushing on from the east.

The great ship attained its full speed, and we glided by Ischia, Capri, the fortresses, the prisons, and the vineyards, till only a twinkling light high up on a point told where the last land lay.

Never had the tumult on deck ceased. Singing, crying, laughing, quarrelling, complaining of hunger, the fact that they were at last off for America seemed to rouse in all a desire to say something or make a noise. Some few women who fancied that already they were seasick, though the ship merely quivered now and then from the motion of the screw, sat about with their heads on their husbands' shoulders.

Now a greater stir was brought about by the ringing of the bell that announced supper for the steerage. The majority of the emigrants had had but a hasty bite at breakfast-time twelve hours before, and, being healthy and hearty, were ravenously hungry.

From the steerage galley, which was on the level of the main deck forward under the fo'c's'le head, the cooks and stewards began to lug great tanks of food and baskets of bread. These they lined up in a narrow passage-way between the hatch and the bulkhead of the galley. The tanks were huge tinned things holding about twenty-five gallons each, and from the first there was ladled out macaroni Neapolitan, from the next chunks of beef the size of one's fist, from the next red wine, and then came the bread-baskets and the boiled-potato tank.

178 IMPORTED AMERICANS

As we had come aboard and got the blankets, as I have told, we were each handed a red card bearing an inscription that it was "Good for One Ration," just as on the *Lahn*, and advised that the passengers form themselves into groups of six and elect a *capo di rancio*, who should manage the mess, and would, when elected and given the six ration cards of his group, be issued a two-gallon pan and a gallon flask-bucket for coffee or wine. When the blanket was enrolled, each person found inside a fork, spoon, pint tin cup, and a flaring six-inch-wide, two-inch-deep pan out of which to eat, identical with those on the *Lahn*.

The plan, or rather the ship's company's ideal of it, is that the *capo di rancio* shall take the big pan and the bucket, get the dinner and the drinkables, and distribute the portions to his group. But it works out that one or two assistants are needed to carry the bread if it is not desired to soak it by dropping it into the mess in the pan, and a woman with a baby in her arms cannot very well carry a full pan and a full bucket. When the meal is over, some one of the group is supposed to collect the tin utensils from whatever part of the steerage quarters the group has chosen to eat its meal in for that time, take them to a wash-room under the fo'c's'le head, where there are several tanks with running water, and wash them ready for the next time. But the crowd in the wash-room after meals was so great that about one third of the people chose to rinse off the things with a dash of drinking-water; others never washed their cups and pans; and still others waited till the next meal and then washed their kit just before they ate. When I say that the water supplied for washing kits was raw sea water and cold at that, any housewife

will understand instantly why none of the cups, pans, spoons, or forks were clean and fit for use after the first meal, if they were even then. Yet the emigrant pays half the first-cabin rate for fighting for his food, serving it himself, and washing his own dishes.

This night we had little trouble, for Antonio and I understood the order about the groups of six, and we did everything in order; but the mob was two hours in getting its supper satisfactorily, by which time that portion of it which had been hot was unfit to eat.

Just before the bell was rung there came down from the boat deck a trim young man in the uniform of an Italian naval officer, and as he passed me I saw that he was of surgeon's rank and knew he was Dr. Piazza, the surgeon detailed by the government to the *Prinzessin Irene* to look after the welfare of the emigrants, just as an Italian naval doctor travels on every emigrant ship leaving Italian ports. The Italian government does about twenty times as much for the emigrants as the United States, yet the condition of health and finance in which they arrive in America is of concern here and not in Italy, for they become a part of us. It is to our interests that they should not be oppressed, underfed, robbed, or given unsanitary treatment.

The young officer went to the door of the galley. The chief steerage cook threw a clean towel over the serving-board that barred it, and on it set clean china dishes, into which the doctor put portions of each sort of food, and ate enough to test the quality. He drank a little of the wine. Every meal thereafter he did the same thing. I had had the opportunity of watching the Italian doctor on the *Lahn* on the voyage to Italy, and I must say that both men did their work in a most

180 IMPORTED AMERICANS

commendable manner. As to the food itself, it was in its quality as good as the average Italian gets at home, but the manner in which it was messed into one heap in the big pan was nothing short of nauseating. Every pound of food and ounce of drink is regulated by Italian law, both as to amount per day and proportion of kind and variety. If there was a failure to live up to the law on the *Lahn* and *Prinzessin Irene*, it was in the wine and fish.

Giovanni Pulejo was chosen *capo di rancio* of our family group, and Nicola Curro, the little cabinet-maker and trombonist, headed the one in which were Nunzio Giunta, Gaetano Mullura, and the other Gualtieri-Sicamino and Socosa boys, while Giuseppe Rota from Avellino, who had joined us at Naples, headed a third group. The others were divided among groups of other friends.

On the occasion of this first meal the emigrants began doing what is the bane of life in the steerage; throwing the refuse from their meal on the deck instead of over the side or into the scuppers. It being the first night out of port, the deck watch was too busy securing derricks, storing mooring-gear, and putting the ship to rights, to scrub the deck with hose and soogey-mougie when supper was over, so that I remember traversing the main deck on the port side about eleven o'clock that night much as I would cross a slippery glacier, for it was covered with a layer of unctuous filth that made footing very uncertain.

It was an extremely hot night, and, though I was weary almost to exhaustion, the air in the crowded compartment was so foul that I could not sleep. The men and boys about me lay for the most part like logs, hats, coats, and shoes off, and no more, sleeping

the sleep of the ineffably tired. I rolled and tossed on the hard pallet till at last I went on deck, and, seeking a deeply shaded corner on a hatch, I sat watching the sea and the night. Possibly twenty minutes had passed when from the mouth of the alley-way that led to the companion-way of the women's compartment a figure emerged and made its way forward cautiously; for after certain hours all steerage passengers are supposed to be below decks. As the figure came near me, I saw that it was my wife. She, too, had been unable to breathe the air below, and had stolen up, bringing with her a heavy shawl. She said the babies in her compartment were crying in relays of six, and that she had had a grand row with the women of the group who occupied the section of bunks next to the women of our party.

The trouble arose over the filthy habits of the other women. They were Neapolitans of the lowest class, and when they were eating their supper had chosen to portion it out while they sat in their bunks, and the result was that bits of macaroni, meat, and potatoes were scattered all over their beds, the beds of their neighbors, and on the floor. The other women who were minded to be cleanly made no protest, merely looking askance, but my wife interposed. She brought down a storm of Neapolitan vituperation on her head.

The climax came when the Neapolitans, too lazy to take their dishes up on deck to wash them, rinsed them with a cupful of drinking-water in bed and then endeavored to pour water and pertaining refuse out of the port-hole. A little girl of eleven was engineering the job, and, regardless of the fact that her shoes were filthy with deck slime, used my wife's bed as a step to climb up to the port-hole, where, failing

182 IMPORTED AMERICANS

to get all the water and waste outside, she allowed the remainder to spill inside, down the wall and on the edges of the two nearest beds. I do not know just what happened, but I have an adequate fancy, and at least there was no more dish-washing or filth-spilling in that corner of the compartment.

Just as we had observed on the *Lahn*, the men of the emigrants were reasonably cleanly, as were also about two thirds of the women; but the other third were so grossly dirty that they littered every place they passed in a way that the sailors and stewards would not have been able to keep pace with even had they put forth their best efforts, which they certainly did not. All of the other steerage passengers, a majority by far, had to submit to the reign of uncleanness.

I have not told the worst by any means. It could not be put in print. The remedy for the whole matter is to pack fewer people in the same ship's space, and a regular service of food at tables. The chief stewards of ships will cry, "How can 1,000 or 1,500 people be served at tables?" A perfect argument; but no such number should ever be carried. If the English lines going out to the Cape and Australia can give closed cabins with served meals for a proportionately less third-class rate than the Transatlantic lines, the big emigrant-carriers can do it, and should be forced to give up a part of their profits, which are enormous, in order that sanitary conditions at least may prevail.

It was nearing morning when we were found by the deck watch and driven below. The air was far worse than when I had gone up, but in about half an hour the wind shifted from the quarter to the bow and of course to its velocity was added that of the ship, so



THE VOYAGE

183

that a fair draught was set going below decks, and I fell asleep.

The noise made by the men and boys about awoke me in little more than an hour later, and the second day of the voyage was begun.

CHAPTER XV

THE VOYAGE—*Continued*

IT was a gray threatening morning when I came on deck. The boys of our party came up one by one, and were a very ill-pleased lot indeed when they found that if they wished to wash even their faces and hands they must use the salt water in the scullery-rooms forward, or else be content with half a tin cupful of drinking-water, for at the drinking-water taps a sailor was constantly stationed to prevent any one from taking more than was enough for drinking. In a short while, though, they learned to go often for a drink during the day, and save what they did not want in empty wine-bottles, unused flask-buckets, etc., and with care they secured enough for facial ablutions each morning. As for those fellow-passengers who were not overfond of washing, the scarcity of water was seized as an excuse for not washing at all.

About eight o'clock the steerage cooks and stewards served "biscuits" and coffee. The latter was what might be expected. The first named was a disk of dough, three quarters of an inch thick, and a hand's length broad. It was as hard as a landlord's heart, and as tasteless as a bit of rug carpet. The worst of it was that about half the biscuits were moldy. About some 3,000 were served out, and for the next half hour disks went sailing high in the air over the sides and into the sea. Three times on the voyage were the biscuits moldy: considered from the



MID-VOYAGE SCENES

Mora—Syrian Jews—Prostrated by the Swell—Children
Escaping Seasickness

9876543210



Egan War Department commissary standpoint that is not bad.

I gathered our party in the lee of No. 2 hatch, and we breakfasted on food from the store brought from home, eked out with the coffee and the two sound biscuits we received. We used a corkscrew to separate the biscuit into edible fragments

After breakfast the crowds on deck took to mirth and song. Mouth-organs, tambourines, and accordions were produced, and it became evident that it would take a great deal to long repress the resilient Italian spirit. Before an hour had passed every man who had a set of lotto cards and numbered disks had started a game in some corner sheltered from the wind. A real Gulf of Lyons blow was coming on slowly, and I knew a few hours would see an end of the merriment. So far the ship was as steady as a dead man's stare.

The dinner-bell rang, and the crowd, since it was happy, very, very hungry, and not at all sea-wise, ate to repletion of the fare, which was about the same as that of supper the night before, only being ladled out with more care. I warned our people that since they were where they were, and not engaged in their usual toil and exercise, and since it was likely to be rough, they should not eat very much. All obeyed except Camela, Concetta, Ina, and little Nastasia. They ate till the big pan was empty.

After the meal Ina quizzed me as to why the ship floated.

"What does it sit on while it runs along?"

"The water."

"Just water? No rails?"

"No. It is water and nothing else for half a mile down."

186 IMPORTED AMERICANS

She thought solemnly a moment, and then her big eyes brightened.

"Oh, I know why there are so many children on the ship. If they were all big folks they would be so heavy they would make it sink, wouldn't they?"

In an hour the sea increased from a small jumble to a short swell, and the crowds on deck began to grow silent. As my wife and I walked about watching faces growing pale, it was a study indeed. Those who have known the first throes of seasickness will understand why these poor people grew sorely afraid. If it had not been for the teasing of those who had crossed before, or who were mired in a reeling deck, they would have been almost panic-stricken. Our party, all except Nunzio Giunta, my wife, and myself, wilted before the wave.

In fifteen minutes two thirds of the crowd had hurried below, and the other third were a sight to behold. I made Lamea and Concetta, who were deathly sick as a result of their over-indulgence at dinner, stay up in the nursing arm until both were unable to hold up their heads. Concetta's heart-action was very bad, and it seemed best to get her to bed, so Nunzio Giunta supported one and I the other, and though the ship was rolling savagely by this time we managed to get them aft and below. As I came back after Ina, she was crying beside Antonio, who was very sick indeed.

"What is the matter, Ina?" I said.

"O, Uncle Berto, I'm all sicked, and I'm going to die, 'n' they'll throw me overboard, 'n' I'll never see Giuseppe" [her father].

For the emigrants it was a frightful afternoon, and the compartments below and the deck above were in a condition that is beyond the scope of any tale.

At supper time about one sixth of the crowd lined up to get rations. So many of the *capo di rancio* phalanx were sick that nearly all of those who did draw rations did it on borrowed tickets. I saw one man get the full portion for six. The others of his group were unable to touch a mouthful, so he sat down in a corner out of the wind and ate every particle. It was a gastronomic feat worthy of record.

The worst feature of this stormy afternoon was that the ship's officers chose it as the time to deliver to the emigrants the passports which had been taken from them for inspection by the police in the Capitaneria at Naples. It was also made the occasion of the "counting of noses," when it was made sure that Caterina Fancetti No. 214, and Giovanni Masuolo No. 468, etc., were duly aboard. Since the United States authorities exact a fine of \$200 from any ship which delivers less emigrants to the Ellis Island or other port authorities than the ship's manifest shows to have been aboard, the ship's people take great care that for every number and name they have on the manifest there is an emigrant to deliver.

This would have been all well and proper the next day, for instance, but this afternoon one half of the steerage passengers were so wretchedly sick that it was nothing short of cruelty to compel them to get up out of their beds and come up on deck, where they were passed in line before the officers, and the passports were delivered as names and numbers were answered and checked off.

Nunzio Giunta, who had no qualm of seasickness, attended to getting Antonio and the men and boys up, while I went below for the women. They were in a condition that was truly pitiable. Concetta's white

188 IMPORTED AMERICANS

face had a purple tinge in it, and she lay gasping for breath; her heart-action really dangerous. Camela could scarcely lift her head. The steerage stewards in their dirt-smeared working rigs were in the compartment, pushing, shoving, jerking, and cursing the women and children to get them out and up the companion-way. The result of their efforts was to clear the place of those who were not too sick to go readily, but the large number that remained in bed were not given any great length of respite. One of the stewards came around with a stick, a piece of pine box, rapped on the sides of the bunk, and poked them with it, and soon they were herded at the foot of the steps, where the greater number of them sank down in a heap, unable to attempt to force their way up through those who had dropped down on the stairs. My wife and I contrived to get Camela and Concetta up the companion-way. The others were able to help themselves. In the alley-way we found a state of things of which it is as revolting to write as it is to read. There was not a spot on which it was fit to step, yet here was jammed a mass of sick women and children, many of them sunk down against the wall. The officers were not yet through with the people coming up from the next compartment forward, and so two sailors were guarding the door to prevent any more women coming out. I contrived to work Concetta through to the door, and just outside the portal, in order that she might get the air, and in so doing placed some ten feet between my wife and myself.

Just then there came along one of the steerage cooks, bearing a big can of supplies from the storeroom. There was no room for him to pass in the alley-way. He cried out in German for the people to

make way for him, but of course they did not understand, and were too closely packed to do so even if they had. He was a big fellow of a very brutal type, and when he found that the path was not cleared he turned his shoulder, drew back, and drove his shoulder into the mass of women and children. I saw what he was going to do, but could not reach him. Women with babies in their arms, children deep down in the press of their elders, were knocked back in a heap. One of the women he struck was my wife. Quick as a flash, she recovered herself and drove a blow straight from the shoulder, landing under his left ear. One of the sailors from the outside started in, but I blocked him. A more surprised man than that steerage cook it would be difficult to imagine. He went on about his business very meekly. The women around gazed at my wife in awe, and one of them asked Camela later what manner of woman she was to imperil her chances for admission to the United States by striking one in authority.

We had chosen the *Prinzessin Irene* because she is the largest and best emigrant-carrying ship in the trade, and the line to which she belongs stands toward the front among the others in its treatment of the third-class passengers. People who have crossed many times and know all the ins and outs of steerage travel prefer the *Lahn* or the *Prinzessin Irene*, so that we knew we should find the minimum of abuse in her. What must the conditions be in ships in the northern trade and in the cheaper ships running from Mediterranean ports. Almost the only time that the third-class people were treated as passengers was at the time of planking down their 200 lire. The men of the crew were inclined to treat them as inferior beings, to be

150 IMPORTED AMERICANS

knocked and pushed about, and I regret to say they took their cue from their immediate superiors.

The first day of the voyage was Sunday, and the weather was improving. The seafolk people began to think life worth clinging to. The *cups et rancia* crowd at dinner was nearly the full size. My wife looked once at the mixture in the big gun and then turned away. Though I knew what the matter was I asked her.

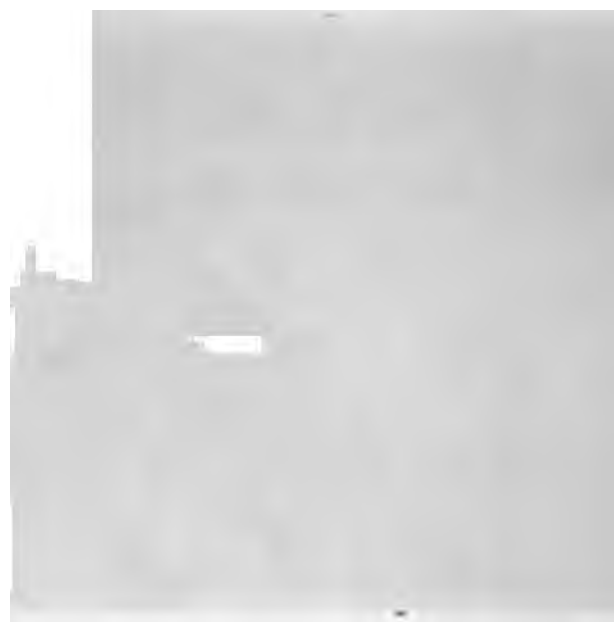
"I was just thinking how far, how very far it is to Martin's," she said with a tremble in her voice.

Knowing full well that there are always secret channels on board a ship for the getting of food if one has money, I had been trying every steward, cook, page, etc., I could corner, and offering ridiculous prices for something to eat. Not that the food for the steerage was so bad we could not eat it. We had been eating it, and we expected to continue to eat it; but we wanted a supply to fill in with on those occasions when it was not what we wanted. When I sailed as a member of the crew in ships of the Hamburg-American and American lines, a very good source of revenue to the cooks and stewards was the secret sale of food to the third-class passengers who had money. On the *Lahn* we had been able to buy everything we wished. The trouble on the *Prinzessin Irene* on this voyage was that the inspector was aboard. At last, however, I found a petty officer who had a cabin down the alley-way, and I "persuaded" him. The result was a sudden and gracious increase in our comforts in all that one could expect in the steerage. The only drawback was the necessity for extreme care in coming and going.

In the Sunday afternoon chatting around deck, where



a Dozen Races on Common Ground—His Broth-
cup—The Immigrant Madonna



2000

the people sat on the hatches, the deck, the winches, in fact, anywhere they could get, there being no place in the entire steerage section that was distinctly intended for sitting down, I found numbers of people who had squeezed through the examination at Naples by little hooks and crooks.

Monday morning we were nearing Gibraltar. The peaked rock rose up out of the clouds in the west nearly an hour before we slid around Europa Point and came to anchor with the fortress frowning upon us and British warships lying all about. The tender of the company steamed out at once, bringing passengers and mail, and into the steerage there came quite a number of Spaniards, Portuguese, a Moor or two, etc. The bumboat-men swarmed about the ship on both sides, and came up and over the rail like monkeys, hauling up stuff from their boats in baskets.

By the knuckles of Mars! What a joy to get good Dutch, Havana, and Egyptian tobacco once more. In Italy the government so monopolizes the sale of tobacco that the demand for good cigars and pipe tobacco is very slight; therefore to find anything fit to smoke in a strange city is like hunting up lost heirs. When one does get a good Havana cigar in Rome it is as dry as an undertaker's eye.

In addition to tobacco we laid in here a good supply of fruit and nuts, and if it had not been for our very limited baggage could have driven some fine bargains in smuggled goods.

While we lay there taking in the last lighter-loads of freight, the hatches were open and the crew at work on deck, so that, with all the emigrants up from the compartments to see the sights, the space forward of the hurricane deck was one seething, jostling mass of

192 IMPORTED AMERICANS

people. I improved the opportunity to get my kodak out while the sun was bright and the ship still, and had climbed up on a refrigerator by the forward rail of the hurricane deck, and with my camera hidden was waiting my chance to get a group without having them all looking at the lens. I had given out my occupation as photographer to explain to the ship's people and my fellow-passengers my possession and use of a camera. They are not often seen in the steerage. As I stood there two men and two women from among the first-class passengers came by and paused at the rail to look down on the steerage crowd. The one man, a well-fed elderly person, I have since ascertained is an influential Western banker and politician. One woman is his wife, the other woman a friend of the first while the other man is an architect of some repute.

Said Mrs. Banker: "Dear me, just see all those children. What dirty little imps they are."

A tin-cupful of drinking-water to cleanse a family of faces!

Answered Mrs. Banker's friend: "Oh, terrible to think of admitting such people wholesale into the United States. Just look at the slovenly dresses of those women, wrinkled and dirty—ugh."

Sleeping in one's skirts does not improve their freshness!

"Yes, yes," observed the architect, "there ought to be a stop put to it: they are a menace to our civilization."

His grandfather came over to Montreal in the coop of a French sailing-ship about 1840.

"These Italians are the worst of the lot. They are a dangerous element. Stick a knife in you in a minute. Look at that villainous-looking fellow standing right here on this box, smoking a cigar."

The Wise and Superior Four turned their eyes on me, for it was I the banker meant. He went on.

"There is a fair sample of your Mafia member. Criminal? Why, criminal instinct is written in every line of his head and face. See the bravado in the way he holds his shoulders and the nasty look in his uneasy eyes. I'll bet he has a bad record a yard long behind him in Italy, and he will double the length of it in America. By George, I should hate to meet that man at night in a lonesome spot."

I could not resist the temptation. I stepped over to the other end of the box, within a few feet of him, looked up, and said:

"Pardon me; but you are one of the fools who are not safe from their own errors, even in a daylight throng."

At noon I had an opportunity for which I had been waiting: fine, high sunlight on a dinner crowd, and the purser in charge.

This man was a huge fellow, tall and heavy, as powerful as an ox, and one would have thought the two silver stripes on his sleeve were the decorations of a Czar. At every meal, when he superintended the ladling out to the *capo di rancio* corps and their helpers, he had taken upon himself the handling of the crowd. He had no set system of lining them up as the men on the *Lahn* had, but would pick out groups of three and four as the fancy occurred to him and pass them on to the servers, pouring forth a flood of directions, commands, and oaths in German which of course no one but his own men understood. His use of Italian seemed to be limited to "Avanti! Avanti!" which seemed to mean to him, "Hurry up!" "Come on!" "Stand back there!" "Let me pass!" "That is enough!" "Come back here!" "Don't push!"—and forty other things.

194 IMPORTED AMERICANS

The crowd in the rear always pushed the front ranks up nearer the entrance to the "Lane of Food," as the Italians dubbed it, and this seemed to irritate the Czar immeasurably. Forgetting that it was all the fault of his lack of system and constant change of method, he would charge into the press like an angry bull, and clear a lane through them by hurling his own huge bulk into the mass of human beings.

The unfortunate feature of this was that the Italians, with their natural deference, allowed the women and children who were doing *capo di rancio* duty to have the foremost places. I had seen him hurl about women with babies in their arms, and children clinging to their skirts, as if they were mere bundles of rags, and I determined that he should be reckoned with, and, as evidence, sought a photograph of one of his charges in the very act.

Taking a position on the top after rail of the fo'c's'le head on the port side, I set the shutter at one fifteenth of a second and gave the diaphragm a sixteen opening. One of the pictures I took, which is herewith reproduced, tells its own story.

As we sailed away from Gibraltar on a smooth sea, the steerage, well-fed on bumboat delicacies, gathered on the main deck and fo'c's'le head, and games of lotto, cards, and mora, the guessing game, were soon in progress on every hand. Here and there groups were singing or struggling with a few simple sentences in English. Gaetano Mullura and several of the boys were gathered about my wife, and she was teaching them how to count money and ask for something to eat, two of the essentials in America. Gaetano and Felicio Pulejo saved one sentence mass of new information: "Give me some bread, please,"—but lost

him seventy lire, money which it was most desirable for him to have on entering the United States, as proving him not likely to become a public charge, and he was wild with the fear of being sent back. I assured him that I would take care of him, but from that hour he followed me everywhere I went, like a big Newfoundland dog, and until the moment I delivered him into the hands of his friends in New Jersey he was a most unhappy mortal.

The night was extremely stormy, and the tons of water that fell on deck shook the ship so much that few of the emigrants slept. A priest who was voyaging in the steerage in mufti sat up with a group of friends in a corner, praying, and all the men of our party alternately moaned and prayed. The pain in my arm inspired me to anything but words indicative of a religious state of mind.

About two o'clock the Italian *commissario*, the naval surgeon, came down and made an inspection. He found five men very sick in one corner, and discovered a drain there which a lazy steward had allowed to become choked. The corner was worse than a pigpen, and some of the things that *commissario* said and did raised him higher in my esteem than ever.

In the morning I was myself in such a state that I made my way down at ten o'clock to the hospital, the companion-way of which lay just abaft that leading to the women's compartment. There the Italian *commissario* had over fifty sick men, women, and children awaiting his care. I waited till the last, in order to observe the manner of handling the patients. It was expeditious, thorough, and gentle, and all of the patients whom I questioned later said that the German doctor was not to be compared with Dr. Piazza.

CHAPTER XVI

NEARING THE GATE

SUNDAY fell on the 11th, and it was a pleasant day till afternoon, when it began to get rough. The ship's band was sent forward to play on the hurricane deck, in order to cheer up the emigrants, many of whom were beginning to look very badly, and to endeavor to brace them up till port could be reached; for it is a great saving to the company to take as many passengers as possible to Ellis Island in a good state of health.

On this day occurred another medical inspection; and to make all of the health tickets appear to have been properly punched as each passenger was inspected day by day, a steward whom I had heard called Beppo went about and carefully punched any vacant spaces. As neither my wife nor myself had gone by for the last three of the four health inspections, having missed the call by being busy eating in the petty officer's cubby, Beppo punched out the full twelve days of the voyage at one punching. When those tickets were presented at Ellis Island there was nothing to show that their bearers had not been properly inspected each day.

That night Beppo and two other stewards, who were on watch below, went into the women's compartment and drank some wine that had been brought aboard by a Spanish woman of uncertain character, and in a short while a small orgie was in progress. About six per-

sons participated. The other women finally roused to protest, and the stewards addressed them in language that is not fit to be stated here, and continued until they were ready to quit.

In the morning the warmth of the Gulf Stream began to stir the chilled blood of all hands, and the first sail sighted since the Azores caused the poor emigrants to rejoice, as it was a token that they were nearing America. In a slow way the Italian provincial songs which had prevailed changed to American airs, attempted by those who had been in the States. Everybody seemed happier than they had been for days, and first-cabin passengers began to appear in numbers on the forward end of the hurricane deck. Several young women had brought out little bundles of delicacies, candy, oranges, apples, etc., and were dropping them over the rail to the emigrant children below. This kindly occupation was observed by the first officer, who was on the bridge, and he came down in haste and rebuked the first-cabin young women with severity, and sent the ship's interpreter down to hector the emigrant children and their mothers. I wonder what he would have said had he known the quantities of first-cabin fare that was being smuggled to emigrants by the stewards and cooks every day.

That night we saw Nantucket light, and from that on my wife and I counted the hours. We arrived too late the night of the 13th to go up the harbor, and so proceeded slowly so as to reach Quarantine by eight o'clock on the morning of the 14th.

The night before, the joy among the emigrants that they were reaching the Promised Land was pitiful to see, mingled as it was with the terrible dread of being debarred.

200 IMPORTED AMERICANS

There was little sleeping all night. About twelve o'clock the women woke up the sleeping children, opened their packs, and took out finery on top of finery, and began to array the little ones to meet their fathers. My wife pleaded with Camela to stay in her bunk and wait for daylight at least, but Camela could not understand why she should wait, and at three o'clock little Ina was brought up on deck arrayed in her very best, and as clean as her mother could make her with a small bottle of water and a skirt combination wash-rag and towel.

By six o'clock all the baggage in the compartments had been hauled out and up on deck, and the hundreds of emigrants were gathered there, many trying to shave, others struggling for water in which to wash, and mothers who had been unable to dress their children to their satisfaction in the cramped quarters below were doing the job all over again, despite the chill air.

Happy, excited, enthusiastic as they were, there was still that dread among the people of the "Batteria," the name used to sum up all that pertains to Ellis Island. I saw more than one man with a little slip of notes in his hand carefully rehearsing his group in all that they were to say when they came up for examination, and by listening here and there I found that hundreds of useless lies were in preparation. Many, many persons whose entry into the country would be in no way hindered by even the strictest enforcement of the letter of the emigration laws, were trembling in their shoes, and preparing to evade or defeat the purpose of questions which they had heard would be put to them.

Some of the people who had confided in me came around even two or three times to ask me whether I thought they looked at all "sick in the eyes." One

NEARING THE GATE 201

woman who fancied that her baby had trachoma gorged the child all that day in an effort to get it asleep and keep it asleep, so that the doctor should pass it without examining it, as she was prepared to protest against its being waked up.

More than once I heard leaders of groups telling men:

"Remember, you have got no work and you paid your own way."

"Oh, but they will not let me in if they think I have no work and will have no money to keep my family from charity," protested one fellow whom I knew was under promise of work.

"That makes no difference; you are a jackass not to do as I tell you; don't you think I know my business?" was the answer he received.

One man whom I knew to be of independent means and in no wise an unfit person under the law to be admitted was going about in a very nervous state, his hand constantly on some papers in his breast pocket. I had talked with him before, and he had told me he had had a store in Salerno. Now I approached him and drew him into conversation about the land already in sight, and before long he drew out the papers he had in his pocket. In addition to his passport and his regular ticket of health he had the naturalization papers of a full-fledged American citizen. The name on them was not the name on his ticket of health, and which would be the same on the ship's manifest, and I told him that if he endeavored to use the naturalization papers at the docks he would certainly get into trouble. He was greatly frightened and was very suspicious of me, so much so that I was unable to get any further information out of him. I found one of his friends

202 IMPORTED AMERICANS

aboard who was a man of more experience, and after telling him just what lay before the Salerno man if he attempted to use the naturalization papers, I persuaded him to find out where and how the Salerno man got them. In half an hour he came back and said the Salerno man was below, weeping, and ready to commit suicide, but had told him that he had gone with three other men to a man in the first wine-shop on the Strada del Duomo off the Strada Nuova in Naples, and had paid fifty lire each for American citizens' papers brought home by returning emigrants, and the four were to receive fifteen lire each if they returned them after use. The three other men had sailed on the *Citta di Napoli*.

Numbers of the people were privately taking out and setting aside varying sums from their slender stores of money, with which to "pay something to the American inspector and American doctor." So accustomed were they to extortion by officials, that they refused to believe me when I told them that it would cease at Ellis Island. They were astounded and deeply puzzled when it did.

Giuseppe Rota followed me wherever I went, for I had promised to lend him the money to replace his stolen seventy lire, and though we were hours and hours yet from Ellis Island he was afraid the ship would dock at any moment, a giant in the uniform of an American immigrant inspector would appear and demand to see twelve dollars, and I would be out of sight, in which case he would be locked up and sent back.

As we approached Sandy Hook the alternate glee and depression of the groups were pathetic. Even Antonio was trembling with excitement and said to

NEARING THE GATE 203

me: "Suppose they will not let me back in. Can't I tell them just to telephone up to my bank in Stonington, and they will tell them that I got a wife and property there, and it will be all right." Camela's tears were constantly ready to fall, for there dwelt in her heart a dread that something would arise to prevent her reunion with Giuseppe.

The steerage stewards and the interpreter under the direction of a junior officer appeared and ordered all the steerage passengers to pass up from the forward main deck to the hurricane deck and aft, leaving their baggage just where it was. Wild commotion broke forth, for this was preparatory action at last. Slowly the chattering, excited hundreds were got aft and crowded into the space usually given to second-cabin passengers, and after a long wait there, while we approached Quarantine, and the port doctor's boat came out, and the *Chamberlain* carrying the Ellis Island boarding-officers and a newspaper man or two, there were cries forward along the hurricane deck which indicated that the crowd was being passed back to steerage quarters.

I knew we were about to pass before the port doctor's deputy and the boarding-officers, and got our party together and into the line passing forward along the promenade deck. As we approached the forward end we saw the dour German doctor standing with a gray-whiskered man in uniform, on whose cap front was the welcome gold-thread eagle design of the United States service. As we came nearly abreast of them I saw another official on the right-hand side, and turned my head slightly to see what was occurring on that side of the line. I caught a glimpse of steerage stewards beyond the officials, hurrying the emigrants



204 IMPORTED AMERICANS

down the companion-way, and the next instant received a heavy raking blow on the bridge of my nose and up my forehead. It partly stunned and dazed me, and I was merely conscious of stumbling on and of having the spectacles which I wore for reading or distance-viewing hanging by the hook over one ear. Before I could even see, I was at the head of the companion-way, and the stewards were hustling my wife down the steps. I gathered from what she was saying that the German doctor had struck me, and, turning to look at him, saw he was looking after me with a sneer on his face. To go back would have been to spoil my investigations just at the last stage, and with a lamb-like meekness I went below, where my wife told how, having uncovered my head, as is the rule in passing the doctor, I had replaced my hat a second too soon as I turned to look to the right, and the German doctor had reached over her head and struck me with the back of his wrist, inflicting a heavy blow under the pretense of brushing my hat from my head.

CHAPTER XVII

WITHIN THE PORTALS OF THE NEW WORLD

WHEN the inspection was finished, the great steamer got under way once more, and in the glorious sunlight of mid-forenoon we steamed up between South Brooklyn and Staten Island, with the shipping, the houses, and the general contour of the harbor very plainly to be seen. On every hand were exclamations among the immigrants over the oddity of wooden-built houses, over the beauty of the Staten Island shore places; and when the gigantic skyscrapers of lower Manhattan came into view, a strange serrated line against the sky, the people who had been to America before cried out in joyful tones and pointed. A low murmur of wonder was heard from the newcomers. Nunzio Giunta, at my elbow, said:

"Antonio told the truth."

Then there was a rush to port to see the Statue of Liberty, and when all had seen it they stood with their eyes fixed for some minutes on the great beacon whose significance is so much to them, standing within the portals of the New World and proclaiming the liberty, justice, and equality they had never known, proclaiming a life in which they have an opportunity such as never could come to them elsewhere.

The majority of the immigrants aboard who had been over before had landed previously at the Battery, and few knew Ellis Island to be the immigrant station, so that comparatively little attention was paid to it. An-

206 IMPORTED AMERICANS

other odd thing was the effect the sight of the magnificence of New York had on the people who were destined for Western and New England points. More than one expressed a desire to remain in New York. If it be considered that nine out of every ten immigrants are of rural birth, and that the city is always most fascinating to country people, it can be understood why immigrants are so prone to congregate in the cities aside from the considerations of convenience to labor and opportunities for small trading. I have found many Jews who went out of New York on their first trip, and on their second stayed in the city, returning with their entire families and with all plans made for a permanent residence in the metropolis.

In what seemed a very short space of time we had steamed up the harbor, up North River, and were being warped into the North German Lloyd piers in Hoboken. There were only a few people down to meet friends of the first-class, but the usual crowd awaited the first-class passengers. Some of the Italians bore extra overcoats to give to the shivering "greenhorns," as they call the new American word which is current throughout the south of Italy and in the Italian quarters of American cities.

What seemed to the eager immigrants an unreasonably long time of waiting passed while the customs officers were looking after the first-class passengers and they were leaving the ship. When the way was clear, word was passed forward to get the immigrants ready to disembark. First, however, Boarding Inspector Vance held a little tribunal at the rail forward on the hurricane deck, at which all persons who had citizens' papers were to present them. I watched him carefully as he proceeded with his task of picking out genuine

STANFORD LIBRARY



Part of the Author's Party—All Eyes to the Statue of Liberty



WITHIN THE PORTALS 207

citizens from the other sort and allowing them to leave the ship at the docks; and if all officials are as thorough and as careful as he, then is the law enforced to its limit, and the many evasions of it which seem to exist are things no official or set of officials can prevent operating on this side of the water. Here, again, I could not help seeing that deceit, evasion, and trickery were possible, inasmuch as the inspector can only take the papers on the face of them, together with the immigrant's own statement; and if the gangs who smuggle aliens in on borrowed, transferred, or forged citizens' papers have been careful enough in preparing and coaching their pupils, there is no way of apprehending the fraud at the port of arrival, nor would there be at the port of embarkation; but *there would be no chance for any such practices if the examinations were made in the community of the immigrant's residence.*

Those whose citizenship was doubted by the inspector, and who had their families with them, were compelled to go to Ellis Island with them, or allow the families to go through the process alone.

At last we were summoned to pass aft and ashore. One torrent of humanity poured up each companion-way to the hurricane deck and aft, while a third stream went through the main deck alley-way, all lugging the preposterous bundles. The children, seeing sufficient excitement on foot to incite them to cry, and being by this time very hungry, began to yell with vigor. A frenzy seemed to possess some of the people as groups became separated. If a gangway had been set to a rail-port forward, there would have been little of the hullabaloo, but for a time it was frightful.

The steerage stewards kept up their brutality to the

208 IMPORTED AMERICANS

last. One woman was trying to get up the companion-way with a child in one arm, her deck chair brought from home hung on the other, which also supported a large bundle. She blocked the passage for a moment. One of the stewards stationed by it reached up, dragged her down, tore the chair off her arm, splitting her sleeve as he did so and scraping the skin off her wrist, and in his rage he broke the chair into a dozen pieces. The woman passed on sobbing, but cowed and without a threat.

As we passed down the gangway an official stood there with a mechanical checker numbering the passengers, and uniformed dock watchmen directed the human flood pouring off the ship where to set down the baggage to await customs inspection.

The scene on the pier had something impressive in it, well worthy of a painter of great human scenes. The huge enclosed place, scantily lighted by a few apertures, and massive with great beams and girders, was piled high in some places with freight, and over all the space from far up near the land end, where a double rope was stretched to prevent immigrants from escaping without inspection, down to the pier head, where the big door was open to allow the immigrants to pass out and aboard the barges waiting to convey them down the river again to Ellis Island, was covered with immigrants, customs inspectors, special Treasury detectives, Ellis Island officials, stevedores, ship's people, dock watchmen, and venders of apples, cakes, etc.

The dock employees were all German, some of them speaking very little English, and none that I saw using Italian. While their plan of keeping the immigrants in line in order to facilitate the inspection of baggage was

WITHIN THE PORTALS 209

all very good and quite the proper thing, the brutal method in which they enforced it was nothing short of reprehensible. The natural family and neighborhood groups were separated, and a part of the baggage was dumped in one place and a part in another. When the dock men had herded the off-coming immigrants in a mass along the south side of the pier with an overflow meeting forward of the gangway on the north, it was the natural thing for the parties to begin to hunt for each other, and for leaders of groups to endeavor to assemble the baggage. Women ran about crying, seeking their children. Men with bunches of keys hurried hither and thither searching for the trunks to match in order to open them for customs inspection, and children fearsomely huddled in the heaps of baggage, their dark eyes wide with alarm. The dock men exhorted the people in German and English to remain where they were, and, when the eager Italians did not understand, pushed them about, belabored them with sticks, or seized them and thrust them forcibly back into the places they were trying to leave.

One massive German speaking good English was endeavoring to prevent our party from going to the spot where we saw our baggage, and where the customs inspectors were already at work. Camela and Concetta were in advance, Antonio was assembling the hand baggage, and my wife was guarding the camera, inoperative here for lack of light, so that there was no one with the party that understood German or English.

"Get back there, get back there!" he shouted in English.

"I must go unlock my trunks," said Camela in

210 IMPORTED AMERICANS

Italian, understanding from his gesture that she was called to a halt.

"I'll knock the brains out of a few of you dirty — — — with this club. G— — your — — souls to — — any way. I'll break your neck if you leave that line again, — — — — —," etc.

So saying, he thrust his open palm into her face and forced her back. I got up just in time to set him back on a fig-case and inform him that we had stood for brutality on a foreign soil and on shipboard, but we were through taking it mildly.

"Wot! I'll fix you for buttin' in, you — — dago!"

"Hold on, that fellow's a Secret-Service man. He's no dago. He speaks too good English," said another dock man who hurried up to the first man, who had risen and was preparing to "do" me.

His manner changed.

"'Scuse me, mister, but ye see these — — — would make anybody mad; they ain't got no sense at all, don't mind what you tell 'em, and 'd run all over Hoboken if you let 'em."

I gave him a little good advice on how to treat well-meaning human beings, and we passed on.

In a few minutes we were having one more wrestling-match with the baggage. By this time the customs men had passed our heap, and when I did get an inspector and got it looked into, two trunks were held up for customs charges on account of all the provender packed in them, and the two musical instruments Antonio had bought in Naples were held. Unfortunately the marks of the prices asked by the Neapolitan dealer were still on them, and though Antonio had got them for just about one third, the customs

STANFORD LIBRARY



ans and Italians—Swedes Arriving—Loading the
Barges, New York



WITHIN THE PORTALS 211

appraiser later set a duty on them that totaled more than half the original cost. When we were through with the trunks, we found that the inspectors had passed over a part of the hand baggage. Two men standing by offered to mark it with chalk just as the inspectors mark it to show it has been inspected, and I was about to allow them to do it and then hand them over when my wife came up with the camera, and they turned and hurried away, going aboard the ship. I think they were either ship's people, or part of the crew from some other boat at the North German Lloyd piers.

While we were waiting to get an inspector, we had time to buy something to eat from the fruit and cake venders. Though it was mid-October, five cents each was asked for apples to be bought at any street corner in New York for one cent, and ten cents a slice for a thick yellow cake that was the worst mess of coloring-matter, adulterated flour, and soda, I have ever set my teeth into. It was as heavy as a stone and equally gritty. Even the Neapolitan boys would not eat it. On top of all this, when we paid for it in Italian silver money, the venders allowed only seventeen cents for a lire, when taking them at nineteen cents would have been at a profit. Many baskets of such food at such prices were sold to the immigrants that day, for we passed the remainder of the morning and part of the afternoon on the dock, there being four ships laden nearly as heavily as ours in ahead of us, and the barges run by contractors to carry immigrants from the various docks to Ellis Island had more than they could do. So we waited. Few of the people aboard had eaten any breakfast, because it was rumored among them they would land in

212 IMPORTED AMERICANS

time for breakfast, and they had been looking forward to a good meal on shore.

I think it was about two o'clock when we were finally allowed to go aboard the barges at the end of the pier. I observed two men following my wife and myself and surveying us critically. At the gangplank they stopped us and examined our bit of baggage very carefully.

"You may save yourself some inconvenience by telling us who you are," said the one man very courteously to me.

"Who are you?" I said in broken English, expecting the appearance of some grafting game.

"I am a special customs inspector, and we spotted you two as queer. What are you?"

"We are writers making a study of the immigration question. What did you spot as queer?"

"We thought you were dagoes all right, but this lady is the first woman I have ever seen in the steerage with such well-kept finger-nails, and we were a little suspicious."

In the work of hustling the immigrants aboard the barges the dock men displayed great unnecessary roughness, sometimes shoving them violently, prodding them with sticks, etc., and one young Apulian who paused to look around for his father aroused the ire of the dock man nearest him, who planted a by no means gentle kick in his fundamentals, observing,—

"Oh, get down there; you're too damned slow!"

One barge with power and another without, if I remember correctly, were lashed together, or there may have been a tug on the outer side of the second craft. Antonio and Camela, with the larger portion of the party, were hustled into the second barge, while my

WITHIN THE PORTALS 213

wife and I squeezed into the second, little Ina with us. The great improvements in the way of heating, seating, and hospital accommodation for the sick which Commissioner William Williams and his assistant Allan Robinson were then making were not yet in evidence in the barge on which we rode. We had either to squat on the floor or sit on our baggage, already mashed and crushed till the point of utter dissolution seemed not far away, so we stood up.

Slowly we steamed down the river in mid-afternoon, and when we reached the slip at Ellis Island we merely tied up, for there were many barge-loads ahead of us, and we waited our turn to be unloaded and examined.

As the second craft cast off and moved away, Ina saw her mother and Antonio going with it, and the big tears came into her lovely eyes. She watched them till they were gone from sight, and then turned away so that neither my wife nor I could see her face. Every now and then her sleeve would go up to her face, but she was very quiet. Soon she turned around, and the signs of tears were gone, but in a moment she turned away again. She was struggling bravely against her wish to cry.

"What is the matter, Ina?" said my wife at last, when the tears began to roll faster. Ina forced a smile and said,—

"Oh, nothing truly, except the sun hurts my eyes."

Waiting, waiting, waiting, without food and without water; or, if there was water, we could not get to it on account of the crush of people. Children cried, mothers strove to hush them, the musically inclined sang or played, and then the sun went down while we waited and still waited. My wife and one of the

214 IMPORTED AMERICANS

boys had walked into the space roped off around the plank which had been put aboard. Just then some of the youngsters who had been trying to steal off the forward end of the barge, boylike, were chased back by the barge men, one of whom began rushing and pushing the people in the open space back into the crowd—a very needless procedure, as there was no reason why what room there was should not be utilized.

"What are you doing, mate?" called one of the other men outside.

"Oh, I'm driving these animals back," and he swore foully.

Just at that instant he caught my wife by the arm, menacing her and the boy with a short bit of board he had in his hand.

"Take your dirty hands off me this instant," said my wife, white with anger. The fellow stepped back, amazed at her resentment and her English.

"Meant no harm, lady," he deprecated. "You've got to be rough with this bunch. I get so sick handling these dirty bums coming over here to this country, I'm going to get in trouble some time for rousting 'em, I s'pose."

"If that is so," she answered, "you had better get another job, for you are not fit to handle even wild animals, let alone kind-hearted, sensitive people like these, who are not to be blamed if everything, even your speech, is strange to them."

STANFORD LIBRARY



ing Immigrants on Barges—Inspectors and Immigrants
at Ellis Island



CHAPTER XVIII

THROUGH ELLIS ISLAND

COOPED up in the barge, we waited till the sun got down into the smoke of Bayonne and Elizabeth and was a great red ball only, so dull that the eye could contemplate it pleasantly. Then came the shadows of night, and we began to dread that our turn to be disembarked would come so late that we should either be taken back to the steamer or be kept on the island until morning. Myriads of lights were shining in the great buildings. Each time the old ferry-boat floundered across from the Battery it brought a crowd of friends of immigrants who had been summoned from New York and elsewhere to meet the newly arrived ones. All the races of Europe seemed to be represented in the crowds on the ferry-boat as it passed close to us when bound back to the Battery.

The babies had sobbed themselves to sleep, worn-out mothers sat with their heads drooped on the children they held to their breasts, and among the men mirth and song had died away, though now and then a voice would be heard inquiring if any one knew when or where we would get something to eat.

"All ready for the last *Irenes*," sang out a voice somewhere in the darkness up by the buildings, and there was a clatter of feet overhead and on the wharf. The doors of the barge were opened. The barge hands dragged out the plank. The ropes restraining

216 IMPORTED AMERICANS

the crowd were dropped, and the weary hundreds, shouldering their baggage yet once again, poured out of the barge on to the wharf. Knowing the way, I led those of our group who were with my wife and myself straight to the covered approach to the grand entrance to the building, and the strange assemblage of Old World humanity streamed along behind us, an interesting procession indeed.

When we came to the doorway I halted our section, and we piled the baggage and waited. Antonio had all the papers for the Squadritos, and with him also was Salvatore Biajo, who, thanks to the short-change game worked on him by the draft-sellers at Naples, must have some money advanced to him before we got inside. If the officials there saw me giving him money they would want to know about it, and I did not wish to attract attention to myself.

Antonio and Camela were meantime madly hunting us about the wharf, and just as the official at the doorway had ordered us to go on in, regardless of the others, each party caught sight of the other.

Half-way up the stairs an interpreter stood telling the immigrants to get their health tickets ready, and so I knew that Ellis Island was having "a long day" and we were to be passed upon even if it took half the night. The majority of the people, having their hands full of bags, boxes, bundles, and children, carried their tickets in their teeth, and just at the head of the stairs stood a young doctor in the Marine Hospital Service uniform, who took them, looked at them, and stamped them with the Ellis Island stamp. Considering the frauds in connection with these tickets at Naples and on board, the thoroughness used with them now was indeed futile.

THROUGH ELLIS ISLAND 217

Passing straight east from the head of the stairs, we turned into the south half of the great registry floor, which is divided, like the human body, into two great parts nearly alike, so that one ship's load can be handled on one side and another ship's load on the other. In fact, as we came up, a quantity of people from the north of Europe were being examined in the north half.

Turning into a narrow railed-off lane, we encountered another doctor in uniform, who lifted hats or pushed back shawls to look for favus heads, keenly scrutinized the face and body for signs of disease or deformity, and passed us on. An old man who limped in front of me, he marked with a bit of chalk on the coat lapel. At the end of the railed lane was a third uniformed doctor, a towel hanging beside him, a small instrument over which to turn up eyelids in his hand, and back of him basins of disinfectants.

As we approached he was examining a Molise woman and her two children. The youngest screamed with fear when he endeavored to touch her, but with a pat on the cheek and a kindly word the child was quieted while he examined its eyes, looking for trachoma or purulent ophthalmia. The second child was so obstinate that it took some minutes to get it examined, and then, having found suspicious conditions, he marked the woman with a bit of chalk, and a uniformed official led her and the little ones to the left into the rooms for special medical examination. The old man who limped went the same way, as well as many others. Those who are found to be suffering from trachoma are very frequently sent to the hospital on the Island and are held and treated until "cured." There is neither space nor excuse for discussing here



218 IMPORTED AMERICANS

the question of "curing" in a few days or weeks cases of trachomatous conjunctivitis. The powers at Washington have ruled that immigrants may be held and cured, though there are surgeons at Ellis Island who do not believe in it, and the best specialists in New York contend that months or years are necessary to eliminate any danger of contagion, while the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary experiments in Boston have convinced the doctors there that cures are the exception.

Concetta Fornica was the only one of our party whom the doctors examined more than once. Her eyes were inflamed slightly, but she was passed. Just where we turned to the right, a stern-looking woman inspector, with the badge, stood looking at all the women who came up to select any whose moral character might be questioned, and one of her procedures was to ask each party as to the various relationships of the men and women in it. Her Italian was good.

Passing west, we came to the waiting-rooms, in which the groups which are entered on each sheet of the manifest are held until K sheet or L sheet, whatever their letter may be, is reached. Our party being so large, and some of the declarations which are used to fill out the items on the manifest having been made at Messina, some at Reggio di Calabria, and some at Naples, we were scattered through U, V, and W groups.

We sank down on the wooden benches, thankful to get seats once more. Our eyes pained severely for some few minutes as a result of the turning up of the lids, but the pain passed.

Somewhere about nine o'clock an official came by and hurried out U group and passed it up into line



Stairway of Separation—Checking into Pens



1

THROUGH ELLIS ISLAND 219

along the railed way which led up to the inspector who had U sheet, then came V group, and then W. Knowing that the first into line would be the first passed, and having the task of gathering our people together out of the crowd as fast as they were passed, my wife and I hurried to the end of the lane and were among the first before the inspector. Our papers were all straight, we were correctly entered on the manifest, and had abundant money, had been passed by the doctors, and were properly destined to New York, and so were passed in less than one minute. We were classed as "New York Outsides" to distinguish us from the "New York Detained," who await the arrival of friends to receive them; "Railroads," who go to the stations for shipment; and "S. I.'s," by which is meant those unfortunates who are subjected to Special Inquiry in the semi-secret Special Inquiry Court, which is the preliminary to being sent back, though of course only a portion of "S. I.'s" are sent back.

By the kindness of the official at the head of the stairs by which we would ordinarily have passed down and out to the ferry to take us to New York, we were allowed to drop our baggage behind a post, and, standing out of the way of the crowd, pick out our people as they filtered through past the inspectors. Salvatore Biajo came through marked "Railroad," and was passed along to get his railroad-ticket order stamped, his money exchanged at the stand kept beside the stairs under contract by Post & Flagg, bankers, and in a minute more he had been moved on down the stairs to the railroad room, after I had had but the barest word with him. Antonio Genone, with a ticket for Philadelphia, came through without going over to

220 IMPORTED AMERICANS

the right to the railroad-ticket stamping official, and he was down the stairs and gone without even knowing that he was separated from us permanently.

We began to see why the three stairways are called "The Stairs of Separation." To their right is the money exchange, to the left are the Special Inquiry Room and the telegraph offices. Here family parties with different destinations are separated without a minute's warning, and often never see each other again. It seems heartless, but it is the only practical system, for if allowance was made for good-byes the examination and distribution process would be blocked then and there by a dreadful crush. Special officers would be necessary to tear relatives forcibly from each other's arms. The stairs to the right lead to the railroad room, where tickets are arranged, baggage checked and cleared from customs, and the immigrants loaded on boats to be taken to the various railroad stations for shipment to different parts of the country. The central stair leads to the detention rooms, where immigrants are held pending the arrival of friends. The left descent is for those free to go out to the ferry.

Our Socosa boys, despite their labor contracts, came through bound for the railroad room, and they were gone, waving their hands and throwing kisses to us. Then the Gualtieri-Sicamino people, even Antonio, who had completely lost control of the situation, came through, marked "Detained." I was allowed to collect them, that was all; as soon as they were assembled they went down the middle stairs. As soon as the women found they were to be shut up behind the screens of steel, they began to bewail their fortune, and between getting them quieted and getting a proper understanding of just why it had

THROUGH ELLIS ISLAND 221

happened so, I had a lively five minutes. It seemed certain that all but my wife and myself must go behind the bars.

Having passed the last barrier and got all the information I wanted on Ellis Island from the immigrants' point of view, it seemed time to declare myself, and so I informed the night chief inspector who I was and why I was there, and requested that he discharge all our people to me, so that I could take them over to New York, as I wanted to get the story of their first impressions on American soil by being with them when they landed in the greatest American city. The officials were highly amused and interested in the whole affair, showed me every courtesy, and in five minutes I was below at the gate of the detention room with a written order for the entire party, except the "Railroads," to be discharged to me; they were already gone.

I found our people just preparing to sit down at one of the great number of tables to have one of the substantial meals which are served to immigrants; but time was pressing, and so the boys got only a bite and that by grabbing it and taking it with them. Antonio was not to be found, and after a long search I ascertained that he had convinced the obliging chief clerk of the detention room that he could take care of himself in New York and had got himself discharged, leaving the entire party behind. I caught up with him before he got aboard the ferry-boat, and, as I brought him back, got a glimpse into the waiting-room, where friends of immigrants expected to arrive, or witnesses called to testify before the Special Inquiry Court wait until they are summoned and hear the names of their friends read, after which they pass up

to the court room above, or into the room to the west on the same floor, where they have their friends released to them and take them away.

The more I saw of the inside of the great system on the Island the more I was struck with its thoroughness and the kindly, efficient manner in which the law was enforced. If undesirable immigrants are pouring into the United States through Ellis Island, it is not because the laws are not strict enough, or the finest system that human ingenuity can devise for handling large masses is not brought into full play by honest and conscientious officials, to pick out the bad from the good. The whole trouble is that the undesirable immigrant comes up before the honest, intelligent official with a lie so carefully prepared that the official is helpless when he has nothing on which to rely but the testimony of the immigrant and his friends. Only in the home town can the truth be learned and the proper discrimination made. Any other plan is fallacious.

At last we were reassembled. The women had dried their tears. Under the inspiration of being at last within the barrier, of being about to step on American soil and untrammelled, the party seemed to cast off its weariness, and we passed out of the huge building, around to the ferry-boat, and aboard.

In the ferry house we saw a number of young Irish girls who were under the care of a priest and were being taken to the Mission of Our Lady of the Rosary, an institution that looks after immigrant girls who come over to be servants. Large numbers of the people who had been with us on the *Prinzessin Irene* also appeared, tagged with a yellow ticket, and under the leadership of an official from the Society for the Protection of Italian immigrants. As we went aboard,

STANFORD LIBRARY



Excluded for Age—Waiting for Immigrant Friends

2nd Floor Library

THROUGH ELLIS ISLAND 223

this official, with one or two helpers, stood by the doorway to one of the side compartments, and when one of his people appeared he seized the immigrant and thrust him quickly into the cabin, thus getting the crowd together. Then noses were counted and all were found to be present. There are numbers of missionaries and protection societies, all very necessary for the shielding of greenhorns from the sharks that lie in wait for them about the Battery. Formerly immigrant girls were kidnapped by scores, and literally kept prisoners in evil resorts; and men were taken into quarters of the city where it was easy to rob them of all they possessed, and they could not even tell the police where it happened.

When Antonio's eldest brother arrived in New York, he was discharged to a friend of Antonio, who accompanied him safely ashore, and, having other things demanding his attention, thought it wise to put Giuseppe into a carriage and send him to the Grand Central Station. They bargained with a cabman standing at South Ferry to take Giuseppe and his baggage for \$1.50, and Giuseppe got in. As soon as the cab was out of sight of the Battery and of the friend who had met him, Giuseppe was astounded by the cabman's stopping and demanding a dollar more before he would drive on. After a futile argument in sign talk, and with a great waste of language which neither understood, Giuseppe succumbed and paid the dollar. In ten minutes more the cabman stopped and demanded another two dollars. Ten minutes later he had that also. Just about the time he knew he must be close to the station, Giuseppe received another demand, this time of three dollars. He did not have it, and after a violent scene with the cabman, who threatened to beat

224 IMPORTED AMERICANS

him with the butt of his whip, Giuseppe burst into tears, overcome with the feeling of being alone in a strange land and the helpless victim of such a villain. He decided to climb out and try to find his way to the station, so he shouldered his baggage and trudged off to the north, for he knew the station lay that way. The cabman whipped up and disappeared. Finally, after asking scores of people where the station was, and being laughed at by some and pitied by others, he met a little girl who understood Italian, and she pointed out the way. He was only two blocks distant.

There had been no one to meet Giuseppe Rota, and he would have been held in the Island until his relatives could be communicated with. He nearly wept at the prospect of being alone, and so I brought him with us. He was afraid to go five feet away from me on the ferry-boat.

As we docked at the Barge Office we had a slight wait until the returning officials, visitors, and better-class passengers on the deck overhead could be let off, and then we were released. We passed through the huge piles of immigrants' baggage, to which we must return on the morrow to get the heavy pieces of our own, and out to the street.

There was the stretch of Battery Park, the looming buildings about Bowling Green and on State Street, a real Broadway car, and a fine L train roaring north on Sixth Avenue tracks, boys with ten-o'clock extras, and a thousand things that told us we were back home, once again in the best place of all. I was at the head of the party leading the way to a Broadway car, for it was useless to try to go up on the "L" with all our encumbrances, and looked back at my wife. She was

THROUGH ELLIS ISLAND 225

looking up at the trees and the buildings, and she said gently, "Thank God! Thank God!"

The car we took was entirely empty but for ourselves, and when we were inside with our luggage it looked like a baggage car. Weary as our people were, their eyes were wide with wonder at all they saw, and as we swung around into Broadway and started up town I saw in Concetta's eyes that wild look of the "startled fawn" as she contemplated the great cañon, flanked by buildings, into which we were rushing. She shrank from each sudden accentuation of the noise of the street.

People began to get on the car. They stared at us and made audible comments, little thinking that some of us understood.

"Oh, what dirty, dirty wretches," said a woman, with a worn seal-plush sacque, as she looked at our women.

"I don't see why they let these lousy dagoes ride on the same cars other people have to use," observed a stout gentleman with gold-framed glasses as he shrank back from Gaetano Mullura, who had tried to change his seat and was plunging down the aisle owing to a sudden jerk of the car.

Ere long we came to Bleecker Street, and, knowing there were several hotels in the vicinity below middle class, the only sort at which we stood a chance of being admitted, we alighted, and I went in to the desk to see if I could get a half-dozen rooms. Three times I was met with the excuse, "We are all full," though I could plainly see that the room board was but half covered with slips. At each of the hotels we created a stir. As I turned away from the last desk the clerk observed to the cashier:

226 IMPORTED AMERICANS

"Well, what do you think of that for nerve?"

"What's that?" said the cashier, who had been busy.

"Why, that dago coming in here with a push like that, trying to get rooms."

Beginning to get a little exasperated, I led the way west into the Italian quarter, and we successively tried the Italian hotels,—Hotel di Campidoglio, Hotel di France, and one other. All refused us admittance. By this time there was not a member of the party who was not exhausted, so, gathering them together in the shelter of a building in the course of construction, and leaving my wife in charge, Antonio and I went hunting a roof for the heads of all of us. It was an hour later when we mounted the steps at the same house in which my wife and I had lived. It seemed ages since we had left the portal, but the good Signora Tonella was there, looking just the same, and when she found out who it was under the dirt and the Italian clothes she offered the three small rooms she had, and, having no other chance, we accepted. Going back to the Hotel di Campidoglio, I persuaded the proprietor to allow us to go into the rear of the dining-room and get something to eat. It took the sight of money to induce him. The waiter was angry at being requested to serve us, and slammed plates and things on the table. A little silver acted as a sedative to his nerves.

Poor little Ina went to sleep with a spoon in her mouth, and every person at the two large tables was exhausted, it was plain to see. But, with full stomachs once more, we took up the last stage of the journey, and, shouldering our baggage, made our way the several blocks to 147 West Houston Street.

Not one of the three rooms had a full-sized bed in it, and but one had space enough to spread a bed on the



The Immigrants' Track Through Ellis Island

STANFORD LIBRARY

THROUGH ELLIS ISLAND 227

floor, yet after a distressing half hour I got the fifteen persons still with us parceled out into the three rooms, all except Giuseppe Rota, who was number sixteen. Try as I would, I was unable to find room for him to stretch his hulking frame unless he took to the doorsteps, so I escorted him over to the Branch of the Society for the Protection of Italian Immigrants, a few doors west, and put him up there. When he found he was to be left alone, he burst out crying and declared he would never see his uncle in Newark again. I reassured him, and told him I would come and get him on the morrow. I remember leaving the place, and it is a fact I was so worn that, going back to the house, settling the others for the night, and turning in myself, left no impression on my memory, and I cannot say what happened.

We slept until after noon the next day, and then began the process of assembling all the baggage, clearing it from the customs, and of dispersing the remnant of our party to their various destinations.

Explanation of the illustration entitled, "The Immigrants' Track Through Ellis Island," facing this page:

- A. Immigrants landed from barges enter by these stairs.
- B. Surgeon examines health tickets.
- C. Surgeon examines head and body.
- D. Surgeon examines eyes. Suspects go to left for further examination.
- E. Female inspector looking for prostitutes.
- F. Group enters and sits in pen corresponding to ticket letter or number.
- G. Inspector examines on twenty-two questions.
- H. Into special inquiry court.
- I. Stamping railroad ticket orders.
- J. Money exchange and telegraph office.
- K. To railroad pen.
- L. To New York pen.
- M. To the ferry and New York.
- N. Telegraph office.

CHAPTER XIX

THE DISPERSION

WHEN I went to get Giuseppe Rota, I found the officials at the immigrant home were very loath to let him go. He was seated at one of the long tables of the big barracks-like house, with forty other men, women, and children, and was enjoying a hearty meal, notwithstanding his anxiety as to his ultimate fate. Since he had got into their hands the management was chary of relinquishing him to me, even though I had committed him, and poor Giuseppe protested volubly that I had been more than a father to him, and that his only hope of reaching his uncle was through me. After a tiresome explanation I signed a receipt for him and gave references for myself, which were promptly looked up, and then we were allowed to depart.

The next task was to find Ferruchio Vazzana, a Gualtieri man who at that time had a small store on East Fifteenth Street near Second Avenue, and to whom Nunzio Giunta was "raccomended"; then Tommaso Figaro, a painter from Gualtieri, who would be sponsor for Nicola Curro. His address was 520 East Fourteenth Street. Nicola and Nunzio went with Antonio and me, and we had barely entered the Italian district of that part of the city when two or three men from different directions came flying toward us, throwing their arms about Nunzio, Nicola, and Antonio. They were all Gualtieri people, and in a few minutes I found

myself outside of an excited throng centred about the newcomers and talking at a rate that left me entirely in the dark as to what was being said. When they did remember me, the boys found great difficulty in explaining how I, an "American proper," came to be so closely associated with them, and I noticed a marked cooling of the enthusiasm among the people about. They were extremely suspicious of me.

In the crowd were two brothers of Tommaso Figaro, and they led the way to his little two-roomed home, for the first of a series of visits about the tenements of the neighborhood, among old friends from the village, which I was compelled to terminate at last by dragging Antonio away and starting for Ellis Island to look after the baggage. Nicola and Nunzio were left in the midst of their friends, who were chaffing them, calling them "greenhorns," and poking fun at their "old-country" clothes. We met other lately arrived immigrants, some who had been with us on the *Prinzessin Irene*, and pressure was being brought on them to get them to lay aside the attire which marked them as new arrivals. A month later Nunzio and Nicola did not look like the same men.

When we arrived at the Barge Office, Mike Delaney, the veteran Battery policeman, who has handled millions of immigrants, was lining up the *aspettati* to go on board the boat which was substituting for the old *John G. Carlisle*, she having broken down at last, and we found ourselves jammed among hundreds. It happened that the morning newspapers had had articles concerning the arrival of our party, and wherever we went the word was passed among the immigration officials that Antonio and I were the leaders of the group.

230 IMPORTED AMERICANS

We found that a part of the baggage had already been sent to the pier of the Stonington Line, but some of the trunks had heavy customs charges against them, and the owners, Concetta, Nastasia, and Pulejo must sign the papers in Boston. We contrived to get through in time to catch the second boat back, and only emerged at all from the tangle of checking, expressing, and receipting at the Barge Office by the kindly aid of the officials there. I found myself wondering how the immigrants who persist in bringing such confused quantities of baggage ever get it to its destination at all, and was thankful that our troubles with our *impedimenta* were about over. Vain was my fancy, for there are tracers out for some of it yet.

On the returning boat I had an interesting talk with a Russian Jew by the name of Mottet Ianje, who had just arrived. He came from near Odessa and had been met by his brother, a hatmaker employed by a Waverley Place firm, who acted as interpreter for us.

Mottet had just finished his term of enforced service in the Russian army, and had more than once been compelled to act in procedures against his own people, whom he said were driven about from pillar to post by the Russian authorities in a way that made America seem like a heaven to them; and when letters came from their relatives here, telling them of how free and easy life was, they were wild to escape from their surroundings, and many more would have followed his example but for the fact that officially circulated reports hinted of strange dangers and hardships which the immigrants must undergo. Before he entered the army he had been working for a farmer who paid him about \$2.50 a week. The farmers through all that part of the country owned their own land, and their farms av-

STANFORD LIBRARY



Mr. Broughton Brandenburg, as He Looked when He
Passed through Ellis Island as an Immigrant

9811 080700A12

eraged in size from forty to fifty acres. Mortgages on these farms were increasing in number, and many of them were held by wealthy Jews in the towns. In the army Mottet averred his pay was forty-five cents per month, and his treatment was of the roughest sort. He was in fine physical condition, though, and looked forward to his work in this country with great eagerness.

He pointed out to me a man, twenty years older than himself, heavily bearded, wearing the odd Russian cap, and with boots to his knees, whom he said had been cruelly treated by the Christians in his village, and had lost all his property through fire, as well as his wife and daughter. His only son was a conscript, and his father did not even know where he was, so he had borrowed enough money to come to America to begin life over again at the commencement of his old age.

By using great haste we got the party assembled and down to the Stonington Line pier in time to catch the night boat. I had intended to go with the Squadritos to Stonington, to see them entirely through to their destination, but an unforeseen obstacle arose in the form of Giuseppe Rota. Because he refused to be left alone to look after himself, I had been lugging him about all the latter end of the afternoon, and when we made our way down to the boat it suddenly occurred to me that if I went to Stonington I must either take him along, leave him standing in the darkness on the pier, or find some one to take care of him. It seemed easy enough to call a messenger boy, but when the uniformed mite arrived and I committed Giuseppe to his care to be taken back to 147 West Houston Street, Giuseppe raised his voice to heaven and bellowed like a bull,

232 IMPORTED AMERICANS

clinging about my shoulders and protesting that he was afraid I was sending him away to lose him, so that he might never see his uncle or any of his *compadres* from Avellino again, and if I did he vowed he would end all his suspense and suffering by plunging off into the dark river then and there, so I dismissed the messenger and took the party aboard, bade them good-bye for a short time, and took Giuseppe home again.

The group was quartered in the steerage compartments forward, which are often filled with two or three hundred immigrants, and inasmuch as they knew they would arrive in Stonington about two o'clock the next morning, they refused to try to get any sleep, but sat about talking and singing while the boat ploughed up the Sound. Ina, however, went to sleep in her mother's arms, and her mother alternately laughed and cried, and hugged and kissed the sleeping child as she thought of the diminishing hours that separated her from her husband.

There were many other Italians aboard, all bound to the New England manufacturing towns, and they made merry on the way, and related the wonders which they had seen so far in the great new country.

At last the big whistle sounded in a long blast, and the boat slowed down. Soon she was bumping against the pier, and an officer was routing out the immigrants and getting them ashore.

Antonio and Giovanni Pulejo were the first on deck, and as they appeared at the end of the plank a wild shout went up from a black group in the shadow, and they heard the familiar voices of Giuseppe, Tommaso, and Carlino calling their names through the darkness.

Soon all were ashore and mingling in a wild scene of embracing and kissing, men and women, men and

men, women and women. When Camela had Giuseppe's arms about her at last, all she could do was to lay her tired head on his shoulder and weep, while Ina stood at one side gazing with wonder on the strange, handsome man who was her father. She was having her first sight of him that she could remember, and preferred to take as good a survey as she could get in the dim light, from a point outside of the zone of embraces. When she had a chance she said to Concetta,

"I thought he was three times bigger than that, but he is nice."

At last the party formed a procession, with Antonio and his happy wife in the lead, and marched up from the dock to the substantial old house on Water Street, on the first floor of which, fronting on the street, Antonio had his barber shop. He found that during his absence his brothers had had a disagreement about affairs in the shop, and Carlino had gone off to work for another barber. Carlino's welcome, while warm enough, had a certain bitter tang in it which was the result of his acquired disdain of anything Italian, and his lack of sympathy for the things at home which made up the principal subject of interest in the family party just then. He has pronounced himself as all-American, and says he will never go back to Italy, no matter what happens, not even for a visit.

It was some hours yet before the final separation of the last of the family party when Concetta, Nastasia, Giovanni, and Felicia Pulejo, and Gaetano Mullura should take the train for Boston, and it was passed in excited chatter concerning all that had occurred since they had last met.

Shortly after daybreak the Boston party, weary beyond expression, got aboard the coaches provided for

234 IMPORTED AMERICANS

immigrants at the dock, and were whirled away. I had telegraphed Stefano Smedele and the other Harrison Street friends what hour they would arrive, and there was another joyful reception at South Station, and another trip through a bewildering confusing city to the Italian quarter, where the last group of the party was subdivided.

Concetta is now living in the home of her uncle, and six months have served to make a great change in her. She has a new spirit, a new gayety and independence, and at my last news from her there are about twenty young Italians in and about Harrison Street who are madly in love with her, and from all I hear it will not be long before she makes a choice and has a home of her own. The chances are in favor of a fine young fellow who is employed in one of the factories as a machine hand.

Giovanni Pulejo is working as a barber in one of the South Boston shops, and Felicia is in one of the great shoe-factories at Lynn, Massachusetts. He says he finds the enormous machine process there very different from the handwork at the little benches in front of Merlino Carmelo's shop back in Gualtieri.

Nastasia is helping his uncle, and is going to have a better education than he has. All have melted into the life of the Italian colony in Boston with an ease and an adaptability that are truly remarkable, and now that they have learned enough English to understand what is said to them and to make some answer, they are beginning to enjoy life. The younger people suffered severely from the unaccustomed cold of the winter, but all have survived it, and I really think Concetta and Nastasia are the better for it.

When Giuseppe Rota and I left the Stonington pier,



Stonington—The Barber-shop—The Squadrito House.



2020
12
12



he was in a wretched state because he realized that he had kept me from carrying out my plans, but I reassured him, and when we reached home my wife and I took him out to the best restaurant to which we could presume to go in our poor attire, and gave him what he said was the best dinner he had ever eaten. The pleasure which the poor peasant lad took in all that he saw and heard about him is only partly expressed in a sentence from a letter which he sent back to the folks at home in Avellino and came, round about, back to me:

"The signor and signora were to me as are my brothers and sisters; . . . the place was a palace such as that of the duke; . . . the American people are strange in not liking to be treated with the honorable respect that should come from common folks."

The next morning he shouldered his little blue striped bag, and we started for the Jersey City station of the Pennsylvania Railroad. On the way we encountered three men in a group, whom I knew with the intimacy of long association. None of the three recognized me, and passed with amused scrutiny. I called one of them by name, and he took to the gutter as if thinking he was about to be held up. Then came recognition, and I introduced Giuseppe. Suffice it to say that we missed the train we had intended to take.

Being greatly pressed for time, I endeavored to persuade Giuseppe to go alone on the next train to Newark, and in the station even found a Newark man who kindly volunteered to pilot him to his uncle's house; but once again he flung his arms about me, and, to quiet him, I bought another ticket and went along.

As we got off the car in Newark and turned into the

236 IMPORTED AMERICANS

Italian district, the strains of bands fell on our ears, and soon we saw decorated arches spanning the streets, crowds of people in holiday dress thronging the way, and later a procession came by in which scores of little girls, marching in white, preceded a half-dozen strong men bearing a platform on which was a saint's figure. The people were celebrating the feast day of the patron saint of Avellino, and the figure was covered with purses, medals, watches, etc., while heaped-up gifts lay at its feet.

As we neared the crowd some Avellino youngster saw us and ran ahead shrieking that Giuseppe had come. Again there was a half-hour's wild embracing, laughing, and questioning, in which I found myself entirely forgotten for the time being, and when attention was turned my way it was of a very suspicious sort. Giuseppe told his relatives when we reached their house (back rooms in a ramshackle old frame affair) of the several things we had done in endeavoring to help him, and everything he related made the people about more suspicious. All became silent but Giuseppe. I felt constrained to go, feeling most unwelcome and somewhat resenting the unaccountable attitude of Giuseppe's friends.

As I shook hands with him, he drew forth some small money which had been given him by some one in the crowd, and offered to recompense me in part, and said that when his uncle returned he would send me the whole of what I had expended for him. He had already given me back the seventy lire. When I told him plainly, and made it emphatic, that what slight kindness I may have had the opportunity of showing him was not for any purpose of gain, and definitely refused the money, the people about under-

went a strange metamorphosis: they hugged me and patted me on the back, two darted across the street for schooners of beer, a woman brought sweet cakes, a brand new willow rocking-chair was brought from another room for me to sit in, and for the remaining brief time I had to spend with them I was treated royally. Giuseppe's cousin led in a joint apology for their coldness and concluded by saying,—

"You know American mans ain't good to Eyetal-yuns on'y he make de graft."

When I got back to Houston Street there was a telegram from Philadelphia saying that Genone and the four Socosa boys had arrived safely and would go to work the next day, the four youths going out to the mines, and Genone into a chair factory until he could find employment at his trade of cheese-making. So I knew the party was all safely distributed, and my wife and I began the process of returning to our former state of life. It is strange, but true, that it took us a full week to change social station. At first glance there would seem to be no bar in doing it in a few hours. When my wife and I had gone with a part of our party to my office on the day of our arrival, not a person in the place recognized us, and a half-hour later the editor of *Leslie's Magazine* stood talking with Antonio Squadrito for some minutes, with my wife and I standing beside him, without recognizing us, so it is no wonder that when I went to the storage warehouse to get our effects the clerk refused to believe I was the man to whom the receipt I held had been issued. Agents and janitors refused to show us apartments in the garb we were in, and our clothes were in our stored trunks, so it is easy to see why it was a week before we got away from Houston Street.

Fred

CHAPTER XX

THE STRUGGLES OF THE GUALTIERI BOYS IN NEW YORK

FEW immigrants come to America these days who have not some relative already here, who has prepared some sort of foothold for them, and all have friends who will look out for their interests to a certain extent. This explains nicely the mystery of why immigrants will mass in the four States of the East which lie nearest New York, when the South is offering inducements for Italian and Austrian labor, and the West never has enough farm hands. I am in receipt of letters from large landholders in several parts of the West who want immigrants to come and settle on their lands, and do not understand why, no matter how much publicity is given to the advantages in the West, the immigrants persist in clinging to the East. The reason is that they wish to stay where their friends and relatives are, and their friends and relatives are already situated in the industrial centres of the East, where they in their turn had been detained by the first comers.

The two Gualtieri boys came "raccomended" to Ferruchio Vazzana and Tommaso Figaro, neither of them relatives, but merely friends, and both with enough to do in looking after their own family circles' interests, so that the two were thrown very largely on their own resources; and their adventures in New York, on which I have kept a very careful eye without

THE GUALTIERI BOYS 239

too much interference, form a very typical story of what befalls the "greenhorn."

Both had a small amount of money, and, if necessary, Nunzio could have sent home for more, but his pride forbade. With Nicola it was different; the entire family fortunes depended on this venture, though I did not know it for some months: the bit of property his father owns is worth about \$300, and represents the toil of a lifetime. This had been mortgaged for \$60 at twenty per cent for six months, in order that Nicola might come to America. His wages as a cabinet-maker and finished carpenter in the village had been a most important factor in the family support. The family consists of his father and mother, his wife a girl not yet eighteen, and their year-old baby. To make up for the lack of this, the three adults all engaged in work of some sort until the time when Nicola could begin to send home the splendid earnings to which he looked forward in America.

He had received a good education in the academic and technical schools of Messina, and in addition to being a first-class cabinet-maker is an excellent trombonist. He had served his term in the Guardia di Finanza, and had at one time been awarded a prize of 100 lire for bravery and efficiency in trapping some west-coast smugglers.

With Nunzio the case was different. Though big and strong, he had no technical training whatever, the five years of his life which he had spent in the Carabinieri precluding all opportunities for that. He could be only an unskilled laborer.

The first thing to do was to find them living quarters, and this was done by their friends. Nicola got a room which he shared with four other men, and his board

240 IMPORTED AMERICANS

and washing, for \$3.20 per week, and Nunzio got a tiny single room, in another house, with board, for \$3.50 per week. A part of Nicola's slender store went at once to buy him a cheap overcoat.

The very next day after being settled, they began the hunt for work, accompanied by Tommaso or Ferruchio. Wherever Nunzio went, bosses, superintendents, managers looked at his massive frame and seemed inclined to hire him until they found he could speak no English, and then they turned away, saying they had no time to bother in teaching him how to take orders. All of the contractors for gangs of Italians seemed to have all the men they wished, and as day after day went by, tramping the city, going to as many as forty places in one afternoon, and meeting with a refusal everywhere, Nunzio began to get very discouraged, and Ferruchio to protest that he could not afford the time from his own business to go about and interpret, and Nunzio tried to go alone one morning. It was late in the afternoon before he even found his way back home, and he was very badly frightened. In a little while his money was entirely gone, and he was on the verge of despair.

When things were the blackest, he heard that a number of Italians were being employed to clean out a big store in some place where the "L" trains ran by, and reported it to Ferruchio, who followed up this slender clew and found that Siegel & Cooper were taking on all Italians for their night porter's staff, as they found them much better workmen than the mixed Germans, Irish, and negroes they had had. In brief, Nunzio secured a place in the big department store, going to work at seven in the evening and working until seven in the morning for \$7.50 per week, and

THE GUALTIERI BOYS 241

good pay for overtime. He had Italians all about him, and the work, though heavy, was not unbearable. I photographed him and his associates one night, and the pictures tell the story very well. The great disadvantage was that he could not hear any English spoken, and at the end of six weeks in this country could say nothing but "Good-morning" and a few bits of profanity. Meanwhile he was sleeping all day, working all night, and saving every cent he earned. His hands were growing calloused in the spots that had been sore the first few days, and he was much happier than he had been at any time. But misfortune came. He was detailed to work with a Calabrese who had charge of the day work in the room where the store's waste paper is baled. There was \$17 profit for the company on the saving and selling of each day's waste paper. The Calabrese spoke English and took the orders from the superintendent, translating them to Nunzio and another "greenhorn." Shortly after Nunzio had been promoted to day work and his pay raised a dollar, a cousin of the Calabrese arrived in New York, and the Calabrese wanted Nunzio's place for the cousin, so he began systematically to undermine Nunzio. If the superintendent ordered one thing, the Calabrese told Nunzio it was another, and when the superintendent kicked because the work was improperly done, the Calabrese laid the blame on Nunzio. At last one night the superintendent asked all hands to work a part of the night, and the Calabrese informed him that Nunzio refused to do so, something which Nunzio had not the slightest idea of doing, and in ten more seconds Nunzio found himself being suddenly and inexplicably ushered outside.

Of course it was not difficult to reinstate him in a

242 IMPORTED AMERICANS

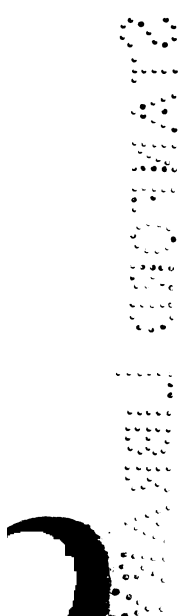
day or two, but after the holiday rush was over scores of people were discharged, and Nunzio went among the rest. Once again he began the task of finding a place, and tramped the streets in the bitter cold, going about asking every place where there was work going on, "You wan-sa man?"—and when it was found that that was about all the English he knew, the boss would always shake his head. For weeks he lived on the money which he had saved while working in the department store, and then one day he accosted Mr. Tolman, the superintendent in *McCall's Bazar* establishment in Thirty-First Street, and, as it happened that a man was needed that very minute to handle the huge piles of printed matter in the shop, Nunzio was put to work at \$1.25 per day. I saw him the evening of the second day, and he was unable to sit up straight from soreness caused by the heavy lifting and carrying he had to do, but he clung desperately to his employment, and now his reward has come. All about him are English-speaking people with the exception of a large group of Austrians, and so he is picking up the language rapidly, and he has been promoted to the running of one of the big machines in the plant and is averaging \$10 a week. His face shines with his prosperity and he wants to get married.

There were many opportunities for work for a skilled cabinet-maker in October and November, but there were three huge obstacles in the way of Nicola's embracing one of the many,—lack of English, lack of tools, lack of a union card.

The matter of the tools was not insurmountable, but the others seemed to be. After a week's hunt for work in some small shop where he could have tools supplied him and a union card was not required, he



Night-porter's Staff at Siegel-Cooper Company's (Nunzio
Giunta in front of post)



THE GUALTIERI BOYS 243

seized a chance to go to work for the United States Biscuit Company, hustling boxes of biscuits, etc., and for his work received pay at the rate of \$4 a week, which he calculated would pay his expenses while he was waiting an opportunity to engage in his trade. Four days of this work saw him exhausted physically, his hand mashed, and his wrist strained so that he was unfit for work of any kind. Before he was well again he was in debt so deeply that he was nearly distracted. Just at the time when his family was expecting he should be sending home some fine sums of money, he was unable to make even his own living, through lack not of capability but of opportunity.

He got two or three days' work for an Italian carpenter who was doing some roof-repairing, and the \$4 he made paid one week's expenses at least; then he was commissioned to make a cabinet for filing papers, and Tommaso arranged with an Irish carpenter named Delaney, who had a shop at 147 West Thirtieth Street, for Nicola to work there while making the cabinet, paying Delaney a dollar a day for the use of tools and shop. There was no fire in the shop during Christmas week, and Nicola caught a heavy cold. New Year fell on Friday, and there was no work of course. He spent the day resting and doctoring himself. Saturday morning a terrible blizzard was blowing, and he walked through it from the East Side to the shop, arriving at seven o'clock, but no one had appeared to unlock the place. If he could have spoken English he could have inquired where to find Delaney or where to telephone him, but all he could do was to wait or go home, so he waited there on the step in the driving storm until one o'clock that afternoon, when he appeared at my house hardly in his senses, nearly

244 IMPORTED AMERICANS

dead from exposure and on the verge of pneumonia. Only by his friends taking extreme care of him was he able to go back in a few days and finish his work. During this time Tommaso Figaro, acting on my advice, went with Nicola to both the Carpenters' and Cabinet-makers' locals, and endeavored to get him admitted to the unions. At first the difficulty seemed to be that there was no union man to sign Nicola's application, but this was obviated. Why the matter was delayed thereafter I do not know. Two excellent opportunities for employment at the union rate of \$18.50 a week were offered to Nicola in the last week of January, but he could not begin work until he got his union card. He did not get it then, nor has he even got it yet.

On the 1st of March he must send home the money to lift the debt on his father's property, or the family's little all would go. He was not yet caught up with his own debts in this country, and so he abandoned all hope for the time being of trying to get employment at his trade, and began to look for employment as an unskilled laborer. At the end of a black week he found this in Charles Schweinler's printing establishment in the Lexington Building on East Twenty-fifth Street, and at this writing he is still laboring there, carrying bundles of paper from press to table and such tasks. He is receiving about \$8 a week, adding in his pay for extra time. When the 1st of March came he had just \$7 instead of the needed \$60, and when every ray of hope seemed gone and he was nearly wild with worry a way was opened and the debt was paid.

So far both boys have been so intent on their own struggles and their own work that neither has given much thought to the country in which he now lives, and less to the rights as a citizen which he may come

THE GUALTIERI BOYS 245

to enjoy legally in five years, or illegally at any time he wishes by purchasing fraudulent naturalization papers.

The night we landed in New York from Ellis Island there were signs everywhere of the bitter battle between Low and McClellan and their respective supporters. I explained it all carefully to our people, and they were greatly interested, for they thoroughly understood the electoral form of government, as communal and legislative officials are elected by popular vote in Italy. Two days later Nunzio told me that an Italian friend of his had asked him if he did not want to make a couple of dollars voting at the election two weeks hence.

"Why, I cannot vote; I have not been here long enough," said Nunzio.

"Huh, you *are* a greenhorn. I have only been here two years, and I have voted twice and belong to a political club. You come around to the club with me, and I will introduce you to a man who will give you naturalization papers. We will register you, and you will never need think of it after that. You will be just as much of a citizen as any of us."

When I explained to the boys how illegal this procedure would have been, Nunzio said:

"Well, if that is the sort of thing being a citizen is, I don't believe I want to be one."

CHAPTER XXI

LEGISLATION AND EVASION

IT is exasperating to any patriotic American to have brought convincingly before him the proofs of a wholesale evasion of a very carefully planned code of laws which he fain would think is a sufficient protection of his civic rights and his country's best interests. It is more annoying to realize that the successful evaders are for the most part foreigners, and those, too, of commonly despised races.

The severity of our laws in the matter of counterfeiting is well known, but they have no terrors whatsoever for the gangs of Italian counterfeiters who are giving the Secret Service Department more trouble than it has ever had with native criminals of this order.

The internal revenue laws are very thorough, and the execution of them is far-reaching and systematic, in fact the administration of the federal internal revenue system has long been a boast with this country, and so well did it do its work that now and then a lone moonshiner escaped detection, and that was all. Since the influx of foreign masses into the country, the troubles of the Department have grown. In the larger cities to-day the Bohemian cigar makers and dealers are building up intricate systems of cigar making and selling without paying the government its due. Buying direct from farmers and planters, failing to account for the stock bought, making without recording the prod-

LEGISLATION AND EVASION 247

uct, selling it clandestinely to refill boxes,—those are some of the details of the operations. The extent of the frauds is growing every day, just as rapidly as the number of aliens who will engage in such practices increases.

Of the naturalization frauds much has been written and said, and I have given a number of instances in earlier chapters which show how the Italians particularly operate with fraudulent naturalization papers, not only using them to vote with in this country, and so reap the harvest of political heelers,—meanwhile having any true idea of citizenship they might get hopelessly abased,—but farming them out to serve as cloaks for passing in as citizens several of their countrymen each year. The worst feature of this is that politically unscrupulous men in all of the large cities of the country do not hesitate to use their influence to obtain fraudulent naturalization papers for their alien followers, in fact employ the papers to buy the friendship of the aliens or to reward services already rendered. There are election districts in the Italian quarter of New York where not more than onehalf of the registered foreign-born voters are legally entitled to ballot.

The remedy for this feature of alien legislation and evasion is to change, by Federal act, the system of examining aliens, and, without making it more difficult for a man to become naturalized rightfully, make the research into his record and attainments so far-reaching that even perjury will not save him; for perjury, as a crime, rests lightly on the average alien's conscience.

The evasions of the contract-labor law and of the exclusion-of-diseased-immigrants law have been many times mentioned in these pages, and constitute a

248 IMPORTED AMERICANS

problem which will not be solved by any legislation making the examination at our ports any more strict.

Smuggling across the border from Canada and Mexico continues to be a favorite method of evasion of the laws. A general statement of the situation is made in the following extract from the Report for 1903 of Commissioner-General of Immigration, F. P. Sargent, which includes extracts from the last Report of Commissioner for Canada, Robert Watchorn, on the year's work done at Canadian ports and on the border. It should prove a revelation to those who believe our present system of controlling immigration is a success.

This statement, covering the past seven fiscal years, will serve to show the steady increase in alien immigration to the United States through the ports of Canada:

July 1, 1896, to June 30, 1897	10,646
July 1, 1897, to June 30, 1898	10,737
July 1, 1898, to June 30, 1899	13,853
July 1, 1899, to June 30, 1900	23,200
July 1, 1900, to June 30, 1901	25,220
July 1, 1901, to June 30, 1902	29,199
July 1, 1902, to June 30, 1903	35,920

The foregoing figures, it should be remembered, refer to those only who are manifested on the lists furnished by transportation lines whose North American terminals are at Canadian seaports as destined to the United States. They do not include those aliens who subsequent to landing in the Dominion enter this country as residents of Canada. The number of such is doubtless considerable, but the Bureau has no data at its command to enable it to make even an approximately accurate computation thereof. The inspection of those referred to in the foregoing statement is made

LEGISLATION AND EVASION 249

at the Canadian port of arrival in the same manner that aliens arriving at seaports of this country are examined.

As to the operations of administrative officers in respect to those who seek admission after temporary residence in the Dominion the subjoined report of the United States commissioner of immigration at Montreal gives information that cannot fail to impress one with the magnitude and importance of the duties discharged under his supervision, as well as with the efficiency with which those duties are performed.

FROM COMMISSIONER WATCHORN'S REPORT.

233 ST. ANTOINE STREET,
Montreal, Canada.

SIR: I have the honor to report for the fiscal year concerning immigration from Europe to the United States through Canada.

Pursuant to the requirements of section 10 of Department Circular 97, dated November 1, 1901, monthly reports have been made to the Bureau on the prescribed forms; you are therefore already fully advised as to the numbers of aliens examined, admitted, or rejected, as the case may be. This report is intended to amplify the information furnished per regular forms.

One year ago I had occasion to report that an act of Parliament had been passed at Ottawa, to wit, Bill 112, passed by House of Commons May, 1902, designed to prevent "the landing at Canadian ports of any immigrant or other passenger who is suffering from a loathsome, dangerous, infectious disease or malady, whether such immigrant intends to settle in Canada, *or only intends to pass through Canada to settle in some other country.*"

Although this act was passed in May, 1902, it was not made effective till September 8 of the same year. This delay was due to the absence from Ottawa of certain government officials whose approval was essential to its promulgation.

During the interim from the passage to the promul-

250 IMPORTED AMERICANS

gation of this act a large number of aliens destined to the United States, and a greater number destined to Canada, were permitted to land despite the fact that the act in question, if enforceable, would have precluded the possibility of their landing.

Indeed, it was not until said act was made enforceable and enforced that a single legal deportation could have been effected from Canada, so that its promulgation may be cited as the one paramount important feature of the year.

The Bureau having been amply apprised of the fact that the above-mentioned Canadian legislation is due solely to revelations made by United States immigrant inspectors on the Canadian frontier, it will not be necessary to dwell further on that point than to emphasize the fact that this very important matter furnishes both the Canadian and United States governments genuine cause for gratification, inasmuch as both are now capable of dealing satisfactorily with a very grave question.

I felt constrained to remark in the annual report for 1902 that we must wait for developments in order to be able to ascertain whether the Canadian exclusion act would afford the satisfaction anticipated, and experience has demonstrated that it was quite a proper observation to make, because it has frequently occurred that a disagreement of diagnoses has been determined on the Canadian medical examiner's certificate, which has led to certain aliens being allowed to land instead of being deported, as would have been the case had the United States medical examiner's certificate been accepted as final.

However, it is a source of pleasure to me to be able to report that while such cases were painfully numerous during the early period of the enforcement of the Canadian exclusion act, there has been a tendency to uniformity of diagnoses, and not only that, but also an appreciable improvement in the conditions existing between the officers of the immigration services, Canadian and United States, respectively.

The superintendent of immigration of the Dominion

LEGISLATION AND EVASION 251

of Canada, Mr. W. D. Scott, has evinced a desire to give a broad interpretation of the act alluded to. In this connection it may not be out of place to quote verbatim a few sentences from a communication he addressed to this office on May 28, 1903:

OTTAWA, *May 28, 1903.*

. . . But it is very clear to me that if these people are of the class who are likely to be refused by your commissioners . . . they must be of the class that would be refused by the Canadian medical officers at Atlantic seaports.

It is quite true, however, that our examination, so far as money standard is concerned, is not particularly strict, but aside from that, on all other points I do not know that there is very much difference between the general reasons for deportation taken into consideration by the Canadian and United States officials. . . .

Allow me to assure you again that this department will do everything to cooperate in preventing an undesirable class of people from the Continent to land in this country.

These sentiments are so plainly indicative of a realization on the part of the Canadian officials of the necessity for enlightened action, that comment on them on my part is unnecessary.

Even a tentative co-operation is a vast improvement on the methods prevalent prior to September, 1901 (all of which was reported June 30, 1902), and a continuance of it may be safely relied on to correct still further a condition which had become well-nigh intolerable.

During the ten months which were covered by my report of June 30, 1902, the gateways to the United States via the Canadian frontier east of Sault Ste Marie became thoroughly well known to many interested persons, and it became evident to us that the properly protected gateways were being avoided by certain classes of immigrants, and it was incumbent on us to ascertain what outlet was being sought in lieu of the well-guarded routes.

252 IMPORTED AMERICANS

This investigation revealed a state of things requiring prompt and vigorous action on the part of the Bureau. It devolved upon me to advise the Bureau that whatever leak there was was beyond the western extremity of the jurisdiction of the Montreal office, and to recommend that steps be taken to "check the current which was all too plainly being diverted to frontier points west of Sault Ste Marie."

Pursuant to instructions I detailed a corps of well-trained inspectors and interpreters to duty at Winnipeg, Manitoba, and at the same time, through the influence of the Bureau, obtained the acquiescence of the parties of the second part (to wit, certain Canadian transportation companies) to Department Circular 97, dated November 1, 1901, to the establishment of a board of special inquiry at Winnipeg.

The Bureau will have some approximate idea of the importance of this change when viewing it in the light of the following figures:

Since the date of the opening of the Winnipeg office (February 14, 1903) no less than 2,157 immigrants have been examined by the board of special inquiry, and certificates of admission have been issued to 1,633, while the surprising number of 524¹ have been rejected for the following causes:

Trachoma	171
Minors dependent on above	128
Likely to become public charge	171
Contract laborers	51
Measles	3
Total	524

The total amount of head tax collected on account of these immigrants is \$3,729, not a dollar of which would have been collected had this important change not been made; nor would a single person in the list

¹ Including Pembina and Portal.

LEGISLATION AND EVASION 253

of objectionables have been denied admission to the United States, but would have crossed the frontier without let or hindrance, as thousands of their equally objectionable kind had been doing for an indefinite period of time.

The work of the board of special inquiry at Winnipeg had scarcely commenced when we discovered that the objectionable aliens whose access to the United States the Montreal office was established to prevent were going still farther westward, and rejections are now not at all uncommon as far west as the borders of Montana, Idaho, and Washington.

The Bureau saw fit, on March 26, 1903, to promote the Montreal office from a special inspectorship to a commissionership, and to extend its jurisdiction to the Atlantic ports, Halifax, N. S.; St. John, N. B.; and Quebec, Que.

This change added materially to the efficiency of this Office in view of the fact that it served as a notice to all concerned that the Bureau was earnestly supporting its force in Canada.

The change also improved conditions at the above-named ports, as it enabled the officer in charge, Assistant Commissioner John Thomas, to co-operate with the border force to greater advantage, and thus conserve to a far greater extent the excellent results attained under his efficient administration.

It has been absolutely necessary for me to apply to the Bureau quite frequently for additional medical examiners, inspectors, interpreters, and clerks, since the close of the last fiscal year, and to the prompt and satisfactory manner in which the Bureau has responded to those applications is due the remarkable showing made during the present fiscal year.

On June 30, 1902, the total force numbered 66; now it numbers 116. On careful perusal the records of admissions and rejections will be found to correspond to the force employed to deal with the situation, and the maintenance of the present grade of efficient officers

254 IMPORTED AMERICANS

along the entire frontier will enable the Bureau to deal as satisfactorily with the matter as it deals with it at United States ocean ports of entry.

During the twelve months ended to-day many persons have applied for admission to the United States via Canada whose personal appearance and general conditions should have precluded the possibility of their having been allowed to embark on any vessel designed to carry passengers under conditions of health and comfort.

It is only necessary to relate that in some instances the filthy conditions have been so abominable as to render it impossible for our medical examiners to give them the attention required by our laws and regulations. The Bureau, like myself, will have to leave it to conjecture how fellow-passengers huddled together in the close quarters of an Atlantic liner have endured the contaminating presence of such persons.

Admission to the United States has been invariably denied to such applicants, and in some instances it has been deemed unwise to return them to Canada, and deportation to Europe has been effected.

I shall not attempt to draw a picture of the situation as it now appears, for the accompanying figures are so fraught with food for reflection that embellishment would be superfluous. However, it may be well to emphasize a few of the more important features represented by these figures.

We have always contended that large numbers of aliens destined to the United States were designedly manifested to Canada, and while there has been some effort made by the steamship lines to correct this evil by refusing passage to the more obviously diseased (some 150 such refusals have been reported by all the "lines"), it is to be regretted that the improvement has not been on broader lines. I have used the words "obviously diseased" advisedly, because the decrease is most noticeable in that class of diseased persons whose ailments cannot be hidden.

For instance, during the ten months ended June 30, 1902, as many as ninety-six cases of favus were rejected

LEGISLATION AND EVASION 255

at the Montreal office alone. It was at that time that the agitation on this question in Canada was kept up with considerable vigor, in view of which the weeding-out process was undertaken at ports of embarkation.

Favus, as you know, shockingly disfigures its victims, eating out the hair, producing disgusting scalp sores until cured, which is often deferred until the head is totally denuded of hair.

An examination at ports of embarkation almost invariably leads to a detection of this disease, and they who are afflicted with it are most likely to be set aside. That such has been the case there is little room for doubt, as you will observe, against ninety-six cases of favus for ten months last year only forty-four such cases are reported for the Montreal local office for the entire year, and only seven of these have been reported since January 1, 1903, a date coincident with the commencement of actual enforcement of the Canadian act aforementioned.

Another dangerous and dreaded disease, which is more difficult of detection, has not been marked by any such decrease; in fact, the very opposite result is shown. Even at the Montreal office, where the classes of immigrants applying for certificates of admission to the United States show such marked improvement over last year, there has been an increase in the number of trachoma cases.

Increases in trachomatous applicants elsewhere than at the Montreal office may be safely ascribed to the extended field of our operations and the increased force of inspectors assigned to duty at border stations. Practically no rejections were reported west of Port Huron last year, whereas the present year's work furnishes a greater number of border rejections west of Port Huron than east of it.

The accompanying tabulated figures will suffice to inform you as to the classes rejected, showing the nationalities furnishing the greatest number of objectionables and the steamship lines carrying them.

Taken as a whole, without special explanatory references, the figures might easily be understood, hence

256 IMPORTED AMERICANS

the necessity for calling attention to certain features connected with these tables.

The figures given are for the whole year, but the latter half of the year is quite different from the former half. The former half may be said to have been quite normal, while the latter half represents a totally unprecedented condition in Canadian immigration.

The Provincial and Dominion governments have been exerting themselves most actively to induce immigration of the "fitter kind," and so well have they succeeded that all shipping facilities have been utilized to their utmost capacity to accommodate agricultural settlers, principally for the Northwest, to the almost total exclusion of passengers from the continent of Europe.

The annual arrivals at Canadian ports since 1892 are as follows:

Ocean ports only:	
1892	27,898
1893	29,632
1894	20,829
1895	18,790
1896	16,835
Total immigration:	
1897	21,914
1898	31,900
1899	44,543
1900 (first six months)	23,895
1900	49,149
1901-2	67,379
1902-3 (estimated)	114,000

These figures are furnished by the Dominion superintendent of immigration, and leave no room for doubt as to the trend of immigration to Canada, and it is only proper to state that the large numbers having arrived since January 1, 1903, have been for the most part of an exceptionally fine class.

A preponderance of agriculturists has characterized every shipload for the time above specified, and they have gone to the Northwestern Provinces in search of homes on the rich and inviting prairies of that vast country.

It is natural to suppose that a certain percentage of

LEGISLATION AND EVASION 257

them will find themselves unsuited to the new conditions, and such of them as do so will probably seek admission to the United States, or return to their native homes. Arrangements have been fully made to gather actual statistics concerning such of them as may subsequently enter the United States, and these figures will be furnished you monthly, as per official requirements.

Not only has the class of immigrants going to the Canadian Northwest, during the past three or four months, been of a highly desirable sort, but the whole immigration to Canada, for Eastern Provinces and for the United States, has shown some improvement during this time. The two nationalities which gave us the greatest concern last year have shown very perceptible decreases, *i. e.*, Hebrews and Syrians.

The former were unquestionably sent to the United States from Europe via Canada to avoid the effects of examination at United States ports, but on learning that the Bureau had taken definite and permanent steps to counteract the deflection from United States ports to Canadian ports the practice was gradually discontinued, and now the border boards of special inquiry have comparatively few cases of the Hebrew race to examine.

A precisely similar condition prevails as to the Syrians, though in the latter case the change has been brought about by the vigorous policy of prosecution which has been waged against professional Syrian smugglers of aliens into the United States via the Canadian frontier.

The smugglers' business has been made so difficult, dangerous, and expensive that most of them have ceased to advertise in Europe, and in consequence the arrivals of Syrians and Armenians have appreciably decreased; but it is said that they will try to continue their business on the Mexican border.

The most notable increase has been among the Scandinavians, and as this class generally seeks employment in agricultural pursuits and avoids the congested areas of population, it is a happy feature of the work of the year to be able to report so desirable a change.

258 IMPORTED AMERICANS

We anticipate still further improvement from the fact that the principal steamship company—that is, the company carrying the greatest number of undesirable immigrants to Canada—has been purchased by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, and as the latter company has shown by its policy that it regards its covenant with the United States (Department Circular 97) as an active working instrument, to be observed in letter and spirit, it is presumed that this spirit will be extended to the operation of its newly acquired property, the immigrant-carrying vessels of the Elder-Dempster Steamship Company.

There has not yet been sufficient time in which to note the actual effect of this change, but so far indications quite warrant the foregoing observation.

Adequate detention quarters have not hitherto been provided at any of the Canadian ports, and much difficulty has resulted from this lack. No fewer than 150 rejected aliens, at Halifax, N. S.; St. John, N. B., and Quebec, Que., have failed of deportation solely on this account, but arrangements are now perfected for the making of necessary provisions of this character, and further trouble in this connection is not expected.

It ought to be stated that the 150 escapes alluded to were not allowed to enter the United States, and that almost the entire number escaped prior to the promulgation of the Canadian act of Parliament which legalized deportations.

In the annual report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1902, it was recommended that none but strong, vigorous, young, and hardy men be assigned to this jurisdiction, and it is with peculiar pleasure that I report that that recommendation has been literally accepted and acted upon. It would be a very difficult matter to find in any given line of work a more capable, efficient, devoted class of officers than the men who have made it possible for such a gratifying report as this to be written.

Covering a direct line of more than 4,000 miles of frontier, including three ocean ports, and inspecting more than 100 trains daily and a large number of fer-

LEGISLATION AND EVASION 259

ries, "sound steamers," and the growing fleets that ply the Great Lakes, these inspectors, in all kinds of inclement weather, and frequently under most trying circumstances, have boarded every train, met every ferry and every steamer, whether by river, lake, or sound, and have prevented the amazing total of 5,158 diseased and otherwise objectionable aliens from entering the United States, and have done all this without delaying either train or boat for a moment, and, what is still more remarkable, without causing a single complaint on the part of the traveling public.

This manifests a commendable devotion to duty, which the Bureau will, no doubt, fully appreciate when considering the year's work thus completed, from the view-point of the difficulties incident to its accomplishment.

The officers are now fully uniformed, as per department regulation, and the traveling public no longer responds reluctantly to the inspectors' interrogatories; on the contrary, the average traveler is always ready to impart the information required by law, and many have shown a willingness to aid the inspectors in detecting the cunning devices of those who live by evading the law.

The showing of thirty successful captures and prosecutions is a very remarkable one, especially when viewed in the light of the wide area covered by the prosecutions. Grand juries all along the line, have viewed the situation with becoming apprehension, and by their verdicts have given us substantial aid in our endeavors to make effective the mandates of Congress.

United States attorneys have also given us very able support by appropriately presenting all the facts we have furnished them to the grand juries and the courts.

There are exceptions to every rule, however, and I regret to have to announce one in this respect.

On May 14, 1903, one Lewis Feighner deliberately took twenty aliens over the border of North Dakota in

260 IMPORTED AMERICANS

wagons. Of these, nineteen were afflicted with trachoma, and all of them had been lawfully excluded from the United States. Feighner set the law at defiance and furnished wagon transportation when the railroad companies refused to carry them.

The whole party was taken into custody at Grand Forks, N. Dak., and returned to Winnipeg by officers of the Bureau, and Feighner placed under arrest. The grand jury indicted him (Feighner) on June 12, and the following day rescinded its action, and he is at present free and unpunished.

On the same date a United States attorney refused to prosecute an offender of this class for reasons not yet disclosed.

This offender presented himself at our Winnipeg office and demanded to know why his brother could not go to the United States, and he was told that it was because he was contagiously diseased.

He took said alien into the United States with him, in utter defiance of the officers of the law. The alien was arrested on a Treasury Department warrant and in due time was deported to Europe, and the offender was arrested also and held under bail for action of the grand jury, but when the grand jury met the United States attorney refused to prosecute.

It is difficult to understand why a sworn officer of the law could refuse to prosecute so serious a violation of the law.

In striking contrast with this case is that of an alien who, after being duly inspected at Quebec, forged an additional name to his certificate, by virtue of which he attempted to take a diseased alien with him into the United States, over the Vermont border. The violation was discovered, and both were prevented from entering, the diseased alien being deported, and the offender has suffered imprisonment in default of bail (five months) and paid a fine of \$50.

Attempts to defeat the law have been made by providing aliens with naturalization papers, but on investigation we discovered sufficient evidence to warrant us in calling the matter to the attention of the Department

LEGISLATION AND EVASION 261

of Justice, and on June 25, 1903, we succeeded in convicting the principal figure in the scheme, and he is now undergoing a two years' term of imprisonment in the Detroit house of correction.

The public press somewhat severely criticised us during the month of September, 1902, owing to a young Syrian girl having committed suicide while being deported to Europe.

The press did not, however, publish the fact that the same girl had been twice deported to Europe from New York, and that when taken into custody at Detroit she was being smuggled into the United States by a lawless element who not only ignore our laws but who derisively defy the officers of the law.

At the time the unfortunate girl took her own life she was made aware for the first time that the man she had expected to marry had married another girl some few weeks previously, and this was probably the real cause of her rash act. At any rate she was treated with every humane consideration by us, and so far as that is concerned, she had no more cause to complain than any one of the thousands who were similarly deported, none of whom made any complaint of our treatment of them.

Concerning those who smuggled her into the United States, we caused their arrest, and the Federal grand jury, on learning all the facts, indicted the principal, who was subsequently convicted and fined \$250, which is an appropriate answer to the sensational stories circulated by a misinformed or a malicious class.

The immigrant inspectors on the frontier are fully conscious of the fact that the average immigrant who is detained for cause is far more a fit object for pity than one deserving censure, and while called upon to perform the unpleasant duty of denying them the coveted admission to the United States, that duty is invariably performed with a maximum of humane consideration.

It is due to the two principal railroads, who are signatories to the agreement under which we are operating, to state that their interpretation of the agreement,

262 IMPORTED AMERICANS

clause by clause and line by line, has been in exact accord with the views held by the Bureau.

Free and full access to all their trains has been accorded your inspectors, free transportation being furnished them that the inspections may be completed before the trains reach the border.

They have removed from their trains at the border all objectionable aliens, and have detained them at their own expense until the Government's disposition of them has been made.

Their instructions to all ticket agents and train hands have been in keeping with our requests, and one result of these instructions has been the refusal to sell tickets to more than 7,000 aliens until they first produce evidence to prove their admissibility to the United States, and in every case they have directed said aliens to the nearest United States immigration office.

So far as these railway lines are concerned, up to this time there is nothing left to be desired as to the observation of the terms of the agreement into which they have entered with the United States Government in regard to immigration.

A reference to the number of exclusions on account of violation of the alien contract-labor laws will be of undoubted interest.

Employers have unquestionably made use of Canada as a source through which to draw employees in many branches of industry. The testimony of the rejected aliens under this head leaves no room for doubt on this point, and while we have been unable to deport any of them direct to Europe from a Canadian port, admission to the United States has been denied them, and they have been compelled to remain in Canada.

Some of them have subsequently tried to effect surreptitious entry to the United States, but owing to the system of inspection in vogue all along the line they have failed, and for their temerity have been deported to Europe via New York, and the pursuance of this policy has had a very salutary effect on others, who are quite as anxious to evade the law, but who are of less defiant demeanor.

LEGISLATION AND EVASION 263

During the periods of great industrial strife, to wit, the anthracite coal strike and cotton workers' lockout at Lowell, Mass., it required constant and unflagging attention to duty on the part of the entire force to prevent violations of the alien contract-labor laws, and the Bureau will doubtless agree with me that the absence of the serious complaint on the part of the United States workmen involved amply attests that the law was remarkably well enforced under the circumstances.

It is the common opinion of all the inspectors at important border gateways that the majority of aliens seeking admission to the United States in violation of the alien contract-labor law are thoroughly advised before leaving Europe that the Canadian frontier affords the easiest access to the United States; indeed their testimony compels this conclusion.

Special cases might be mentioned in wearying detail, but I purpose mentioning one case only, and will ask you to accept it as a criterion and to judge whether it justifies the conclusion aforementioned.

On June 6, 1903, fifty-four aliens applied for admission to the United States at Winnipeg, Manitoba, their destination being Caro, Mich.

The testimony of this party conclusively proved that they were engaged in Europe, that all their expenses were paid by their prospective employers, and that they were advised to reach their destination via Winnipeg, Manitoba. This route involved a journey of 2,000 miles farther than was necessary and a corresponding unnecessary expense.

There can be but one reason for this, and that is that the Canadian frontier as far west as Sault Ste Marie was known to be well guarded, while the frontier west of that point was supposed to be wide open, and it goes without saying that for the same reason the United States ocean ports of entry were also avoided.

Special stress must be laid on the recommendation that none but young, active, strong, and robust men should be assigned to duty on the frontier, and they

264 IMPORTED AMERICANS

should be selected with a view to putting none but men of good judgment in these places of unusual importance and responsibility.

A maintenance of the present system of border inspection must inevitably reflect the wisdom thereof in the returns of the almshouses, hospitals, asylums, and other places of refuge which aliens have previously been wont to seek, for of the 5,158 denied admission at border stations it is not improbable that a very large number of them would already be a charge on the taxpayers of whatever community in which they might have settled had they been admitted, and the 1,439 suffering from the dangerous, loathsome, contagious diseases would certainly have been a hidden menace to public health, and an element of deterioration to the general hygienic standard of the States in which they would have settled.

Every one of the diseased aliens reported herein was examined under most careful circumstances by a corps of medical examiners of high repute for proficiency, whose official certificates in writing are on file here in each and every case, which will, when duly considered, serve to demonstrate what a very serious omission it was to leave the frontier subject to the methods in vogue until recently in matters of immigration.

This report will undoubtedly show that immigration from foreign contiguous territory is susceptible of adequate control, and the Government can select its future citizens with as much care through this channel as through its ocean ports of arrival, and successfully exclude all who would tend to pollute rather than to promote the general body politic.

Respectfully,

ROBERT WATCHORN, *Commissioner*.

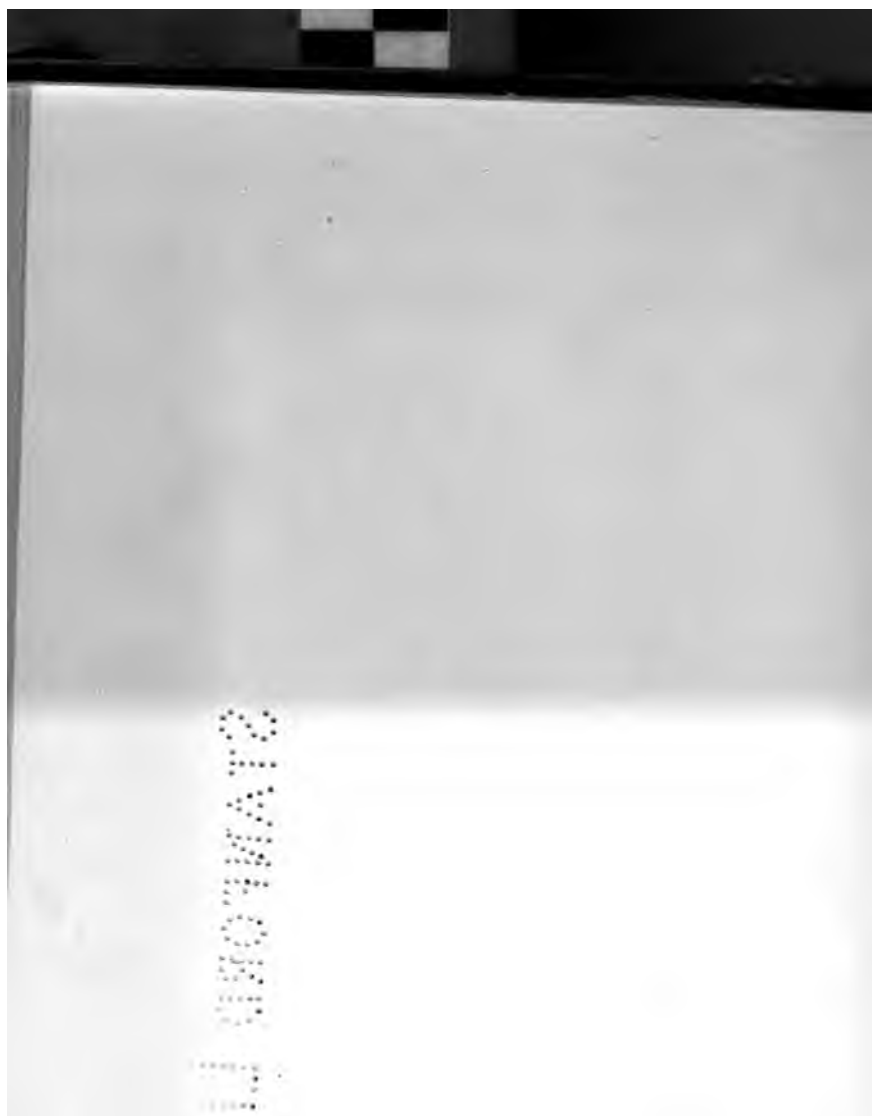
Hon. F. P. SARGENT,

*Commissioner-General of Immigration,
Washington, D. C.*

Of new legislation there is an abundance in prospect, varying all the way from the carefully considered bill



Nicola Curro at Work—Ina Americanized—Saint's Figure,
Covered with Bags of Money



LEGISLATION AND EVASION 265

introduced by Senator Lodge, of Massachusetts, to impose an educational test and exclude illiterate immigrants, to the wildly impractical measure introduced by Representative Adams, of Pennsylvania, a Congressman from a district that is filling up with immigrants, and who would limit the number of aliens who may enter the country in any one year to 80,000. I wonder how he would select them from a million, by competitive examinations in twenty languages and three hundred dialects, and a series of gymnastic events to determine physical fitness? What proportion of men, women, or children would he admit?

Representative Simmons has introduced a bill which would establish a system of State bureaus which should set forth to arriving immigrants the advantages of each particular portion of the country. If all or even a large portion of the immigrants came with unsettled plans or uncertain destinations, this would be an excellent plan, providing that Italian farmers, who are accustomed to farming with a spade, were not deflected to agricultural districts where sulky plows and three-horse teams are necessary, and Scandinavian agriculturists, learning of the wealth of the valley of the Red River, did not go there expecting to maintain their health in a climate entirely different in the mean from that to which they have been accustomed.

There is a great amount of wisdom in portions of the following extracts from Commissioner Sargent's last Report, selected from under the titles of "Distribution and Naturalization" and "New Legislation," and each recommendation would undoubtedly serve to increase the efficiency of our present system and bring about a betterment of the condition of immigrants at present in the country as well as to assist those who might ar-

266 IMPORTED AMERICANS

rive in future; but their great drawback is that they are patches on a system which is fundamentally wrong in itself.

It is impossible for any but the most reckless or foolishly optimistic to consider the figures presented in this report without realizing their serious bearing upon our well-being. It is not alone that virtually 1,000,000 aliens have been added to our population within the brief space of one year, although that fact is one of large dimensions. The constituent elements of this great army of invasion are to be considered, their individual character and capacity for useful work, their respect for law and order, their ability to stand the strain—morally, physically, mentally—of the life of their new surroundings; in other words, the power to assimilate with the people of this country and thus become a source of strength for the support of American institutions and civilization instead of a danger in periods of strain and trial. To doubt that they possess such ability is to discredit unvarying human experience. Human beings vary not so much because of any inherent difference of nature as because of difference in the molding influences of which at every stage of development they are the product. All instruction of mind and training of body constitute a practical recognition of this fact. The problem presented, therefore, to enlightened intelligence for solution, is how may the possibility—nay, probability—of danger from an enormous and miscellaneous influx of aliens be converted, by a wise prevision and provision, into a power for stability and security? If such a solution can be obtained, it seems the part of foolhardiness to make no effort to that end, to trust fatuously to the circumstance that, though numerically immigration was years ago nearly as large in proportion to our population as it now is, no very serious ill resulted from the failure to take any especial care in reference to it other than an inspection at the time of arrival.

In my judgment the smallest part of the duty to be

LEGISLATION AND EVASION 267

discharged in successfully handling alien immigrants with a view to the protection of the people and institutions of this country is that part now provided for by law. Its importance, though undeniable, is relatively of secondary moment. It cannot, for example, compare in practical value with, nor can it take the place of, measures to ensure the distribution of the many thousands who come in ignorance of the industrial needs and opportunities of this country, and, by a more potent law than that of supply and demand, which speaks to them here in an unknown tongue, colonizes alien communities in our great cities. Such colonies are a menace to the physical, social, moral, and political security of the country. They are hotbeds for the propagation and growth of those false ideas of political and personal freedom whose germs have been vitalized by ages of oppression under unequal and partial laws, which find their first concrete expression in resistance to constituted authority, even occasionally in the assassination of the lawful agents of that authority. They are the breeding-grounds also of moral depravity; the centres of propagation of physical disease. Above all, they are the congested places in the industrial body which check the free circulation of labor to those parts where it is most needed and where it can be most benefited. Do away with them, and the greatest peril of immigration will be removed.

Removed from the sweat-shops and slums of the great cities, and given the opportunity to acquire a home, every alien, however radical his theories of government and individual right may have been, will become a conservative—a supporter in theory and practice of those institutions under whose benign protection he has acquired and can defend his household goods. Suitable legislation is therefore strongly urged to establish agencies by means of which, either with or without the co-operation of the States, aliens shall be made acquainted with the resources of the country at large, the industrial needs of the various sections in both skilled and unskilled labor, the cost of living, the

268 IMPORTED AMERICANS

wages paid, the price and capabilities of the lands, the character of the climates, the duration of the seasons,—in short, all of that information furnished by some of the great railway lines through whose efforts the territory tributary thereto has been transformed from a wilderness within a few years to the abiding-place of a happy and prosperous population.

Another means of obviating danger from our growing immigration is the enactment of legislation to prevent the degrading of the electorate through the unlawful naturalization of aliens. Undoubtedly such naturalization is now often granted upon very insufficient evidence of the statutory period of residence, a looseness in the practice of the courts which is fostered by the heat and zeal of partisanship in political contests. It rests with Congress to prevent such abuses, and the consequent distrust in the popular mind of the purity of elections, by establishing additional requirements to be complied with by aliens seeking the privilege of citizenship.

Within the past year the Bureau has established at the various ports of entry a card-index system, by reference to which the date of the arrival and personal identity can be readily verified. To require every alien applicant for naturalization to produce a certified copy of such record, attested by the signature and seal of the custodian thereof, would substitute for the oral testimony of professional witnesses written evidence of an entirely reliable character.

In addition to the new legislation recommended, I have to suggest that Congress be urged to strike out from section 1 of the act approved March 3, 1903, the words which exempt transportation companies from the payment of the head tax for aliens brought by them, respectively, who profess to be merely transits to foreign territory. It is believed that that provision was retained in the act through a clerical error, and its elimination is recommended because of the embarrassments, both to the transportation lines and to the Bureau, in its enforcement. The amount saved to the passenger carriers is too trivial to justify the labor and delay involved in ascertaining who are actually transits,

LEGISLATION AND EVASION 269

and under the law not properly subject to the head tax, and who are merely professing to be such.

The new law referred to above has not been in operation long enough to enable the Bureau to point out specific defects other than that one just cited; but it was so carefully drawn and so aptly embodies the results of the Bureau's experience in the ten years of the latter's existence, that the best results are anticipated.

Irrespective of the effect in diminishing the number of alien arrivals, now approximating 1,000,000 annually, I am impressed with the importance of still further measures to improve the quality of those admitted. Such measures would be merely additional steps in the same direction already taken in dealing with the question of immigration to this country. They would involve no new departure from a policy which has been pursued for years, and which therefore may now be assumed to be a fixed principle of the United States in dealing with this subject. From this point of view it seems not unjust to require of aliens seeking admission to this country at least so much mental training as is evidenced by the ability to read and write. This requirement, whatever arguments or illustrations may be used to establish the contrary position, will furnish alien residents of a character less likely to become burdens on public or private charity. Otherwise it must follow that rudimentary education is a handicap in the struggle for existence, a proposition that few would attempt to maintain. It would also, in a measure, relieve the American people of the burden now sustained by them of educating in the free schools the ignorant of other countries.

There should also be some requirement as to the moral character of such persons. The present law excludes convicts. This only partially accomplishes the purpose of establishing a moral standard for admission to this country. Without attempting in the restricted limits of this report to indicate the method of devising such legislation, it is sufficient to point to the criminal record in this country of many aliens as a justification for this recommendation. Before the close of the

270 IMPORTED AMERICANS

next fiscal year the Bureau will be in possession of interesting and suggestive data in relation to this subject.

For the purpose of distributing arriving aliens in accordance with the plan already outlined, it is recommended that suitable legislation be enacted for the establishment, in connection with the various immigration stations, more particularly the Ellis Island station, of commodious quarters, properly officered, where information may be given to the new arrivals. In such quarters should be displayed maps of the different States, with descriptive matter as to the resources and products of each State, the prices of land, the routes of travel thereto and cost of transportation, the opportunities for employment in the various skilled and unskilled occupations, the rates of wages paid, the cost of living, and all other information that would enlighten such persons as to the inducements to settlement therein offered respectively by the various sections of the United States. I believe that such a plan is entirely practicable, and that its adoption offers at once the easiest and most efficient solution of the serious problems presented by the enormous additions of alien population to our great cities, and the resultant evils both to the people of this country and to the immigrants.

For the purpose of forming an approximately accurate estimate of the actual annual increase of the population of the United States by the immigration of aliens, it is recommended that measures be taken to obtain information of the number of aliens departing annually. These figures will be valuable to students of the subject as presenting both sides of the case, and will correct the extravagant estimates that may be made from reports of arrivals only as to the actual size of our alien population.

I do not think it is an unwarranted assumption to say that in the foregoing chapters the frauds which are enacted for and among immigrants who sail from the southern portions of Europe are well disclosed, and

LEGISLATION AND EVASION 271

that sufficient light is thrown on the dark corners of the situation to enable thinking people to consider understandingly the tremendous problem before the nation; but for corroboration of statements made and for new information of a most pointed and direct nature I beg to submit the major portion of the report of Special Immigrant-Inspector Marcus Braun,¹ who left the United States two or three months previous to the departure of my wife and myself. It considers many conditions among classes of immigrants which, while not so numerous as the Italians, are nevertheless most important factors in the question. Mr. Braun says:

NEW YORK, N. Y., *August 24, 1903.*

SIR: I have the honor to make the following report, pursuant to authority contained in Bureau Letter No. 35,719, dated March 21, 1903, authorizing me "to proceed to such points in Europe as may be necessary for the purpose of procuring information concerning certain knowledge believed to be possessed by the Italian authorities as to emigration of undesirable aliens to the United States, and also in regard to persons who are booking diseased and otherwise inadmissible aliens to Vera Cruz en route to points in the United States." This report is likewise made pursuant to directions received from you in personal interviews had on March 23, 1903, authorizing me to procure general information and evidence, where practicable, concerning the large influx to the United States of undesirable and inadmissible aliens, and the methods employed by steamship companies, agents in their employ, or other persons, to induce such emigration, as is more specifically enumerated in Bureau memoranda containing the following specific questions and directions:

"1. What steps do the steamship companies take at

¹ Exhibits mentioned in Mr. Braun's report are omitted.

272 IMPORTED AMERICANS

European ports to ascertain if their passengers are eligible for admission under the law?

"2. What secret instructions are given to such passengers at the various rendezvous where the government officials make their examinations? Examinations usually made twenty-four hours before sailing. This is particularly true of London and Liverpool.

"3. How many undesirable aliens are brought from the Continent to the Jewish shelters in Whitechapel, London, weekly, and are there put through a purifying process preparatory to being shipped to the United States via Canada?

"4. What steps are being taken at Marseille, Antwerp, and Chiasso to deflect diseased aliens from the United States ports to Canada and Mexico?

"5. Do Canadian lines really reject passengers for cause at Liverpool, as stated by them; and if so, what percentage, and for what causes?

"6. Are immigrants induced to ship to Canada, who would otherwise have shipped to the United States, by reason of a cheaper fare, to wit, the \$2 head tax?

"7. Do all Canadian lines make the two rates indicated? If not, which ones do?

"8. Does Anton Fares, a 'runner' at Marseille, act direct for certain lines? If so, which ones?

"9. It is very important to ascertain if Frederic Ludwig still represents the Beaver Line at Chiasso.

"10. Ascertain how Hamburg-American Packet Company secures the miserable people they put off at Halifax, while carrying to New York on same line or ship acceptable aliens.

"11. Note particularly report of Mr. Watchorn, a copy of which will be supplied. Would also recommend getting copy of January, 1903, *Blackwood's Magazine* and noting article therein on Immigration."

I desire, in addition thereto, to refer to directions contained in Bureau letter No. 36,663, dated April 6, 1903, directing me to observe whether the requirements of section 8 of the act of March 3, 1893, are being complied with, to the effect "that all steamship or trans-

LEGISLATION AND EVASION 273

portation companies engaged in the transportation of aliens shall keep exposed to view in their offices abroad, where tickets are sold to emigrants, a copy of the United States immigration laws, printed in large letters in the language of the country where such offices are located, and to instruct their agents, moreover, to call the attention thereto of persons contemplating emigration, etc."

Subsequent to my return from Washington, after receiving above instructions and directions, and until my departure on April 9, 1903, I was in daily attendance at the Immigration Bureau at Ellis Island for the purpose of familiarizing myself with the work of the Department as conducted at that station.

On April 9, 1903, I sailed on the steamship *Deutschland*, bound for Hamburg, Germany, and arrived at the latter place April 17, 1903. Having received no specific instructions concerning any particular route which I was to travel to procure the information desired, and owing to the fact that I frequently received information which did not permit of a systematic or straight line of travel, and prompted also by the desire to procure authentic information at the very home of the emigrant, I followed occasional instances and cases as they presented themselves to me.

In all I traveled about 25,000 miles by railroad and about 600 miles by special conveyances, visiting substantially all the provinces and crown lands of the following countries: Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, Roumania, Switzerland, Italy, France, Belgium, Holland, and Great Britain, making special studies of the subjects involved at the following European ports: Hamburg, Bremen, Stettin, Fiume, Trieste, Odessa, Naples, Genoa, Marseille, St. Nazaire, Havre, Antwerp, Rotterdam, Southampton, London, and Liverpool.

I find upon investigation that the steamship companies carrying emigrants from Naples, Hamburg, and Rotterdam are subjecting such emigrants to a strict medical examination for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not they are afflicted with any dangerous contagious disease which might prevent their landing

274 IMPORTED AMERICANS

in the United States; this can be said of almost all European ports, but is more strictly enforced at the three ports enumerated; at the other ports there is a disposition to be more lax in this respect, particularly at Havre, France, where, in the search for persons afflicted with trachoma, the eyeball is merely examined, and no eyelid is turned up as at the other three ports mentioned above; the additional method of the physical examination employed is to require the emigrant to hold up his hands, which, of course, does not permit the discovery of any other ailments except those visible to the naked eye. Questions are also asked the emigrants concerning other grounds of inadmissibility, such as whether the emigrant is a criminal or an ex-convict, but no further investigation is made in this respect and the answers given by the emigrant are deemed sufficient.

I did not discover any secret instruction given to passengers at the points of embarkation; the usual questions are asked of the emigrants, and if correctly answered they are permitted to proceed, otherwise they are refused; the latter, however, is a rare occurrence, for the reason that almost all of these emigrants arrive at the ports thoroughly instructed, such instructions being given them before they start upon their journey by subagents in the employ of the steamship companies or their general agencies. While I have no direct proof that the steamship companies are directly concerned or even tolerate the giving of these secret instructions, yet I learned in the course of my travels, particularly in the countries of Austria-Hungary and Russia, that a large number of reputable persons, such as priests, school-teachers, postmasters, and county notaries, are directly connected with certain agents representing these steamship companies, and that they advise and instruct the emigrants how to procure steamship tickets, passports, and all other things necessary for their travel, for all of which they receive a commission from the agent employing them. It is obvious that since the amount of the earnings depends entirely upon the amount of business procured, hence,

LEGISLATION AND EVASION 275

in their anxiety, the subagents above enumerated, by promises and in order to earn a commission, induce a large number of persons to leave their homes and come to the United States. The governments of each of these countries, in good faith, are endeavoring to stop this sort of traffic and provide for the punishment of any person inducing another to leave the country ; but I found that in many of the towns visited the local authorities are in league with the subagents, and their business thrives practically with the consent of the officials whose duty it is to prevent it ; this is particularly true of Austria-Hungary, as I was able to ascertain from personal interviews with a large number of emigrants at the Austro-Prussian border. I also ascertained that a majority of these people act for and are in the employ of F. Missler at Bremen, and The Anglo Continentales Reise-Bureau at Rotterdam. Upon obtaining this information, together with specific data, names and addresses of these so-called subagents, I laid the matter before Dr. Koerber, prime minister of Austria, and Coloman de Szell, prime minister of Hungary. They at first appeared incredulous, and the latter called my attention to the newly enacted prohibitive emigration laws of Hungary, a copy of which, together with translations thereof, is hereto annexed and marked "Exhibit A, No. I" and "Exhibit A, No. II." However, upon my submitting to them the information which I had in my possession, including the names and addresses of people who were acting as such agents, an investigation was caused at their instance, a number of arrests made, and convictions had for the illegal solicitation of emigration. The names of these persons, together with their addresses and vocations, and the periods for which they were sentenced, are annexed hereto and marked "Exhibit A, No. III."

The police officials in the course of the investigation made, which led to the arrest of these men, confiscated a large number of letters and literature containing offers and inducements to emigrate. The agencies whence this literature emanated also flood the respective countries, particularly Hungary and Croatia, with similar

276 IMPORTED AMERICANS

literature through the mails, but great vigilance is exercised by the authorities, and most of these letters, bearing the postmark of Hamburg, Bremen, or Rotterdam, are confiscated and are never delivered to the addressees, if, in the judgment of the postal officials, they contain enticing literature respecting emigration. I have seen at the offices of the ministry at Budapest at least one-half million of these letters and documents from time to time confiscated, and through the courtesy of the Hungarian Government I was enabled to procure a few of the letters which I annex hereto and mark respectively "Exhibit B, No. I, II, III, IV, V, and VI." Some of this literature has features quite amusing, and I respectfully beg to submit to you a copy, together with a liberal translation of two poems, marked "Exhibit C I, and C II," intended to work upon the susceptibility of the plain peasant in order to induce him to emigrate. I also invite particular attention to a slip which is invariably contained in such letters sent through the mails by F. Missler, of Bremen, a copy of which, together with the translation thereof, is hereto annexed and marked "Exhibit D." The idea of sending out this slip appears to be to create the person to whom it is sent a sort of a subagent, by offering him a compensation of eight crowns for every steamship ticket that he succeeds in selling to an emigrant, and through this offer any number of persons are engaged as subagents for F. Missler, at Bremen. The Anglo-Continentales Reise-Bureau at Rotterdam is also engaged in sending out personal letters to peasants, containing offers of commission, provided they will procure for them the sale of steamship tickets. I herewith annex one of such letters, with a translation, marked "Exhibit E."

With reference to written question No. 3, I visited the Poor Jews Temporary Shelter, at 84 Leman Street, Whitechapel, London, and there interviewed the superintendent, Mr. J. Sonper, from whom I learned that on the average 500 Russian, Polish, and Roumanian Jews are brought there weekly by steamer from either Antwerp or Rotterdam, and are detained at the Home

LEGISLATION AND EVASION 277

until they are enabled to raise sufficient money with which to prepay their passage to America, or until they are in a sufficiently good condition to be acceptable to the steamship companies at the port at which they intend to embark. Mr. Sonper himself acts as an agent for various steamship companies, and informed me that since the Canadian Government is equally strict as the United States Government in the medical examination of emigrants he tries to induce persons to go to South Africa, but so far he has met with poor success, for the reason that persons under his care all have a desire to go to the United States. He cited instances to me where people were detained by him at the Jewish Home for as long a period as six months in order that they may be properly prepared for their proposed trip.

A more adequate and definite idea of the scope and activity of the Poor Jews Temporary Shelter may be had by examining the last three annual reports of the organization, a copy of each of which is hereto annexed and marked "Exhibit X I, II, and III."

Concerning the steps taken at Marseille, Antwerp, and Chiasso to deflect the diseased emigrants from the United States ports to Canada and Mexico, I beg to state the following: At Chiasso this practice has been largely discontinued since the strict enforcement of the immigration laws of the United States and the strict observance of the medical examinations at Canadian ports. At Antwerp the practice is still prevailing, though in a lesser degree, the information given to such emigrant being that he sail to England, preferably to London, whence his departure and opportunity of landing in the United States will be much easier than from any other port. The "hotbed" for the deflection of such diseased emigrants, a majority of whom come from Syria, Armenia, and Greece, is Marseille. There are in Marseille about a half-dozen duly licensed and properly appointed steamship agencies, each of whom employs its "runners," the most unscrupulous of whom is one Anton Fares, the publisher of the Syrian weekly *Al Mircad*. These runners are at a landing

278 IMPORTED AMERICANS

whenever a steamer having such emigrants aboard arrives from Syria, Turkey, or Greece. These emigrants are then taken charge of by the runners and escorted to the various emigrants' headquarters to be there examined and classified. Such of these emigrants who are not afflicted with some disease receive the ordinary instructions and are shipped via regular ports of embarkation, mostly Havre and Boulogne. Those found suffering from trachoma or favus are then thoroughly instructed and are told that the only way for them to effect an entrance to the United States is to embark at St. Nazaire, France, and sail on the ships of the French line (*Compagnie Générale Transatlantique*) for Vera Cruz, Mexico, and, according to the personal statement made to me by Fares, those emigrants are then escorted across the Mexican border to the United States by friends or people with whom he is connected in a business way. Heretofore entry into the United States from Mexico was effected by way of Laredo, El Paso, or Eagle Pass, but since the detention and deportation of some of these emigrants who thus effected an entry to the United States this method was abandoned and the above method resorted to. I verified this statement by personal investigation at St. Nazaire and from interviews had with the Mexican and Cuban consuls and the manager of the *Compagnie Générale Transatlantique*, each of whom informed me that no fewer than 250 emigrants leave that port on the 21st day of each and every month for Mexico. I briefly referred to this condition of things in my report to the Department, dated, respectively, Marseille, June 28, 1903, and Paris, July 10, 1903. So alarming did I find these conditions at St. Nazaire that I was prompted thereby to address my cablegram to the Department on July 13, 1903, suggesting a close watch on the Mexican border outside of regular railroad passes, and I also briefly referred to these matters in subsequent communications to the Department. I also ascertained that all of the steamers plying between St. Nazaire, France, and Vera Cruz, Mexico, are controlled and operated by the *Compagnie Générale Transatlantique*,

LEGISLATION AND EVASION 279

and that emigrants are booked directly from Beirut, Syria, via Marseille and St. Nazaire, to Vera Cruz, as more fully stated in my previous communications to the Department on this subject.

Regarding the question as to whether Canadian lines really reject passengers for cause at Liverpool, and what percentage and for what causes, I beg to state that I have visited the various emigrant lodging-houses at Liverpool controlled by the White Star, Cunard, Dominion, American, Allan, and Canadian Pacific Railroad (Beaver Line) lines, and found that the emigrants are subjected to a strict medical examination, and those found suffering from trachoma or favus are promptly rejected, the proportion of such rejections not exceeding two per cent.

As to whether or not emigrants are induced to ship to Canada, who would otherwise have shipped to the United States, by reason of a cheaper fare or because of the \$2 head tax, I respectfully submit that such emigrants are frequently, and in a large number of cases, induced to ship to Canada. The reason for this, however, is not the desire to avoid the \$2 head tax, but because of the cheaper railroad fares charged to emigrants in the Dominion of Canada by the Canadian Pacific Railroad. In every such case the emigrant is invariably told that upon landing he must state his destination to be some place or town in Canada, where he intends to settle. Having thus availed themselves of the advantage of a cheaper fare, they then await the coming of an agent or some person connected with the agency where they purchased their tickets, and are escorted across the border into the United States.

In regard to the inquiry as to whether all the Canadian lines make the two rates indicated, I desire to report that heretofore the Beaver Line charged a cheaper rate of fare than the other Canadian lines; this, however, has been abandoned, and at present a uniform rate is charged over all Canadian lines. I had an interesting and lengthy interview with Mr. I. I. Gilbertson, the Liverpool traffic agent of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which now operates the former Beaver Line

280 IMPORTED AMERICANS

under the name of the Pacific Railway line, and learned from him that, while the line he represented was not in the steamship pool, he was upholding the regular rates of the pool, and had no intention of deviating therefrom. He added that he regretted very much the bad repute into which the Beaver Line had gotten, and, while he admitted that it was partly justified, he thought that it was worse than deserved. Mr. Gilbertson also told me that all of the Continental agents of his line have been fully and thoroughly instructed to comply strictly with the immigration laws of both the United States and Canada in booking passengers, and that under no circumstances would tickets be sold to passengers for Quebec or Montreal whose original destination is some part of the United States.

In reply to the inquiry as to whether Anton Fares, a runner at Marseille, acts direct for certain lines, I beg to refer to my previous reports to the Department made in this connection, wherein I stated, among other things, that Fares does not represent any line directly, but that his services are very much sought after by all of the agencies established at Marseille, and I reiterate that he is one of the most dangerous and unscrupulous men in the business.

Replying to the inquiry as to whether Frederic Ludwig still represents the Beaver Line at Chiasso, I likewise beg to refer to my report on this subject, dated Chiasso, June 25, 1903, and I reiterate that Ludwig still represents the Beaver Line at Chiasso, but apparently does not book any diseased emigrants and invariably causes a physician to examine his passengers. In all other respects, however, I found Ludwig as active, energetic, and reckless in the pursuit of his business as ever before, as a result of which he was arrested in Italy for soliciting emigration, released on bail of 20,000 lire pending his trial, and subsequently "jumped" his bail, forfeiting the amount.

In regard to the question as to how the "Hamburg-American Packet Company secures the miserable people they put off at Halifax, while carrying to New York on same line or ship acceptable aliens," I respect-



Nicola Curro Studying English in the Author's Home in
New York

1

..

1

.

1

LEGISLATION AND EVASION 281

fully refer to my report dated Jassy, June 17, 1903. I endeavored to ascertain the method by which these persons referred to were procured, and for this purpose had an interview at the steamship office of George Stoeckel, at Odessa, by whose representative, Johann Bischof, I was informed that the main reasons for sending emigrants into the United States via Halifax were the cheaper rate and the possibility of evading the immigration laws at the Canadian border with greater success than at the United States ports. Realizing that diseased and afflicted emigrants have to undergo a close inspection at a United States port, this agency of Stoeckel's makes it a practice to solicit the business of such people with the thorough understanding that they are to travel via Halifax. The said agency has a number of subagents traveling all over the southern part of Russia, ostensibly engaged as agents for agricultural implements, representing some American firm, but in reality only to dispose of steamship tickets and seek out such persons who have fears about traveling owing to some affliction which would prevent their admittance at a United States port. These people are given every assurance that if traveling via Halifax they will have to undergo very little inspection, if any, and can obtain admittance into the United States without difficulty. It seems immaterial to these agents whether the emigrant would be permitted to land or not, even at Halifax, for in the latter case he would be deported, with no probability of his ever returning to Russia, and hence the agent would escape all liability. Subsequent to this interview I called on Mr. A. Storm, manager of the passenger department of the Hamburg-American Line at Hamburg, and called his attention to this practice, whereupon he showed me copies of personal letters written to all of the agents warning them not to book any emigrants via Halifax intended for the United States, with instruction that such emigrants would be refused, and, moreover, the agents would forfeit all commissions, the agency being withdrawn from them in addition. My personal investigation seemed to confirm this state-

282 IMPORTED AMERICANS

ment of Mr. Storm, for the reason that prior to my going to Odessa I frequently found circulars inviting emigration to the United States via Hamburg to Halifax, one of which circulars I annex to this report, marked "Exhibit F I." Later on, however, I failed to find any of these circulars except in rare instances, but instead found a large number of circulars sent out by Falck & Co., general agents of the Hamburg-American Line, specially calling the attention of the proposed emigrants to the advisability of having themselves examined by a physician prior to their departure, to ascertain whether they are suffering from trachoma or favus, and informing them of the fact that if suffering from any of these diseases they will be barred from landing in America, regardless as to what route they took. I inclose two copies of such circulars, one in Slovak and the other in Hungarian, together with a translation, marked "Exhibit F II."

Following your instructions to investigate the fact as to whether steamship companies or transportation companies engaged in the transportation of aliens observe the requirements of section 8 of the act of March 3, 1893, I called your attention in some of my previous reports to instances where the law was not observed. However, the law is observed by the majority of the steamship companies, but, I am satisfied, not in an effective manner. It is true that a copy of the law is displayed in the language of the country where such steamship offices are located, but it is equally true that very few of the emigrants have the time or the inclination to read it, and as a large percentage of them are unable to read at all it tends to make the law of very little if any value. At the border of Russia and Germany this law referred to is displayed in the German language, and I found that the great majority of emigrants are Russians, Poles, and Hebrews, none of whom can read or understand the German language.

I desire to invite your particular attention to instructions contained in Bureau letter No. 35,719, dated March 21, 1903, authorizing me "to procure information concerning certain knowledge believed to be pos-

LEGISLATION AND EVASION 283

sessed by the Italian authorities as to emigration of undesirable aliens to the United States," and to personal directions upon this point given me in our interview on March 23, 1903. I have made thorough investigations to ascertain, if possible, first, whether or not such knowledge is really possessed by the Italian authorities, and, second, in what measure this circumstance was instrumental in encouraging undesirable emigration to the United States. I find a general disposition on the part of the Italian Government and authorities to restrict emigration of persons visibly afflicted by some disease, this restriction being by no means made for the benefit of the United States, but because of the opinion that the influx from Italy of this class of people might cause the United States Government to enact more prohibitive immigration laws, a thing very much feared in Italy, for the reason that Italy considers the United States the best safety valve for the discharge of its over-population. More prohibitive immigration legislation on the part of the United States, if it would materially affect the influx of Italian emigrants to the United States, might, in the opinion of the Italian people, have the effect of reducing a great many of their revenues. I have ascertained that the prosperity of entire villages in the southern part of Italy depends upon remittances regularly made from the United States.

The Italian authorities, as such, profess to have no such knowledge of undesirable emigration as indicated in your personal interview with me. Pauperism in Italy is differently construed than in the United States. Over there no person, no matter how poor he may be, is considered a pauper so long as he appears to be able-bodied and is in a condition to walk about, and no person is committed to the poorhouse unless physically disabled to such an extent as to be unable to be about without the assistance of another, and if placed in the poorhouse under those circumstances there is no possibility of their ever attempting to come to the United States. These are the only paupers of whom a record is kept by the authorities, and who are

284 IMPORTED AMERICANS

recorded as public charges upon the respective communities. Of the other class of poor people, who are not only in the prevailing majority, but who constitute a material part of the Italian population, and who, according to American conceptions, would be considered paupers, no public record is kept, except by the priests of the respective villages and towns in which they reside. These people are considered poor and are dependent upon the charities of the Church. They can obtain at any time a certificate of poverty, but still are not recorded as paupers. Mr. Angelo Boragino, deputy consul of the United States at Genoa, gave me valuable assistance in my attempt to discover the existence of such records.

Unlike Italy, all other countries do keep a public record of their paupers, copies of which are obtainable at any time. I beg to annex hereto two such authenticated copies of pauper records of the township of Klenocz, Hungary, and Nyustya, Croatia, marked, respectively "Exhibit G. I" and "Exhibit G. II."

As already reported to you in a previous communication in reply to Bureau letter No. 36,810, dated Washington, April 14, 1903, I located Joseph Ellsner at Littai, Austria, and endeavored to get from him some information with reference to importation of laborers under contract into the United States. I succeeded in obtaining from Mr. Ellsner a copy of a letter addressed to him by some person from Chicago, asking for 200 able-bodied men to work on the railroad, which letter I mailed to you, together with my said report to the Department. I sent you the information that about 1,800 Croatians are being shipped monthly from Fiume to the United States. I endeavored to ascertain the purpose of this large number of emigrants, and found that quite a number of them, especially in the month of August of each year, were hired by several Austrian firms to be sent to Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Mississippi, to cut staves, and that some of these firms, owing to difficulties which they had in the United States with these men, who made trouble and threats against the contractors, abandoned this practice, and it

LEGISLATION AND EVASION 285

is now largely controlled by the firm of Julius Kern & Co., at Vienna, through whose agency some 300 or 400 men are sent to the United States at certain intervals. I paid particular attention to this firm and employed the friendly services of Mr. A. Knoepfelmacher, a journalist, who called at the place of business of Mr. Kern under the pretext of writing an article upon the enterprising ability of an Austrian firm, such as Julius Kern & Co., in dealing so extensively with the United States. The interview was obtained, and incidentally Mr. Knoepfelmacher asked questions with reference to the sending of the contract laborers to the United States, and some information was given him, with the strict injunction, however, that no part of it should be made public. I received a letter from Mr. Knoepfelmacher which I annex hereto, together with a translation thereof, marked "Exhibit H," which letter fairly expresses the contempt of these Europeans at our contract-labor laws and the ease with which they evade them. It was admitted by the firm of Julius Kern & Co. that as many as 1,500 laborers are sent to the United States under contract, each of whom is thoroughly instructed as to the manner in which questions should be answered when arriving in the United States. Subsequent to the receipt of the letter from Mr. Knoepfelmacher he accompanied me to the United States embassy at Vienna, and there, in the presence of Secretary Rives, repeated the statements contained in his letter. The information I thus received, together with the positive knowledge which I possessed that a great many contract laborers enter the United States annually, prompted me to pay particular attention to this subject, and I made various and frequent attempts, particularly at places and railroad stations where emigrants concentrate, to question and interview individuals or groups of emigrants, with a view of learning their destination or of affirming my belief that they were laborers under contract, destined for the United States. Not only did these interrogations confirm my suspicions, but I have become convinced that the importation of contract labor to the United States has as-

IMPORTED AMERICANS

reached alarming proportions of which the Department has not formed an adequate idea. I base this conviction not only upon my experience at the various places where emigrants concentrate, but upon observations made and collected in numerous villages which I reached by special consequence, and in a large number of which I found that the entire male population, able to work, was absent, and upon close inquiry I learned that the men were all in the United States, having gone there under some contract of labor or other. This evil is largely contributed to by residents of the United States engaged in the steamship ticket and foreign exchange business, and not infrequently either connected with or publishing some newspaper in a foreign language. I took occasion to refer to this phase in one of my previous reports to the Department, containing information in part procured by me at the city of Lathach and from the Government at Vienna. I am convinced that Fawcett, at Marseille, also avails himself of many sources of this character in the pursuit of his nefarious business, as I was able to judge from the hundreds of letters I saw delivered to him, coming from the United States and bearing the heading of numerous steamship ticket agents and publishers of Syrian newspapers in this country. Another method which in my opinion is frequently resorted to to promote the importation of contract labor is as follows: A native of a certain village or town abroad, who had spent some time in the United States, will suddenly appear at said village, ostensibly on a visit, and within a short time thereafter he may be met on his return trip to the United States accompanied by groups of men whose number vary from ten to twenty-five, according to circumstances. I have observed such men purchasing a number of railroad tickets at Oderberg, on the Austro-Prussian border, for Bremen, and distribute them among the group of men that so accompanied him. I met the same man, who thus purchased the tickets at Oderberg, a few days later at Bremen, and upon my questioning him for the whereabouts of his friends I saw in his company at Oderberg he denied

LEGISLATION AND EVASION 287

all knowledge of them ; but I saw all of them in the immediate vicinity, and found that they had steamship tickets in their possession which were procured in the office of F. Missler. They were no longer in groups, and acted in a manner as though they had never seen the man who had led them, this being evidently part of their instructions and a matter of precaution. I could refer to hundreds of similar cases which I have encountered in my travels abroad. Most of these people so interrogated by me were in possession of addresses of persons residing in the United States, alleged to be friends or relatives, but which, to my best impression and belief, were frequently fictitious addresses, and the addressees absolutely unacquainted with the emigrants in question. Most of these addresses referred to persons residing inland, particularly in the States of Ohio and Pennsylvania, and rarely to people residing in New York city or other Atlantic seaports. Unfortunately, these emigrants are so thoroughly instructed and prepared, that it is exceedingly difficult and almost impossible to gain an admission from them after they depart from their respective homes.

Supplementing a previous report which I made to the Department concerning the prevalence of trachoma in various European countries, particularly Austria-Hungary, Russia, the Balkan States, and Italy, I respectfully state that so alarming and so widespread is this most dangerous and contagious disease that the governments of the various countries enumerated have adopted most heroic measures for its suppression. In Hungary this disease has assumed such proportions that the Government encounters great difficulties in some counties to muster the required quota of men for military service, trachomatic people belonging to the class which are rejected for the army. To combat and, if possible, to stamp out the disease, the Hungarian Government maintains a special medical corps, consisting of fifty physicians who constantly travel to and fro in certain respective districts to which they are assigned, it being the duty of every person to submit

288 IMPORTED AMERICANS

to an examination for such disease, and if found afflicted therewith to present himself or herself for gratuitous treatment twice a week until cured. Records of such trachomatic persons are kept, and they are subjected to constant surveillance in the manner that no person can leave his respective district for another before first submitting to a medical examination as above outlined; such person is provided with a book in which the physician of the district makes an entry that the bearer is either free from trachoma or afflicted thereby, and if he has undergone any treatment, the period of such treatment is entered; upon the arrival of such person in another district he or she must present himself or herself immediately to the physician of that district, and if afflicted with trachoma the treatment is systematically continued. Although this rule is strictly enforced, people intending to emigrate rarely observe it, and in order to be enabled to give the Department more definite information on this subject I accompanied Dr. Simon Buchwald, one of the physicians appointed by the Government of Hungary for the district of Lipto-Szt. Miklos, on one of his tours through the villages of his district, and was present at the examinations and treatment conducted by him. I succeeded in obtaining from Dr. Buchwald an extract of the official record of thirty-five persons of the age ranging from seventeen to forty-two years, who had left the district for the United States, and were afflicted with trachoma, had been treated by him, and at the time of their departure were not cured. Only four of these emigrants returned to their respective homes, having been refused at the medical examination, regularly held at the control stations of the North German-Lloyd and Hamburg-American lines, at the Austro-Prussian border, upon the ground of this very affliction. I annex the said extract hereto, marked "Exhibit I," containing the names of these thirty-five persons, and having underlined thereon, with red pencil, the names of the four persons thus returned.

Of the countries enumerated, Hungary seems to

LEGISLATION AND EVASION 289

have the disease under best control, although I can state, on reliable information, that there are at least 60,000 persons in the kingdom of Hungary suffering from trachoma. The worst conditions in this respect prevail in Russia, where at least thirty per cent of the army are afflicted with this dread disease, who, after their discharge from the army, spread the affliction in all parts of the empire.

Supplemental to my report heretofore submitted to the Department upon the subject of emigration to the United States of Roumanian Jews, I beg to reiterate that the forwarding of these people is conducted systematically and is invariably in charge of the Jewish Colonization Association. The method pursued in this instance is that representatives of the Jewish congregations in the various places through which these emigrants pass generally await them at the railroad stations and care for their safe transportation to the next station, where the same thing is repeated, until they reach Rotterdam, from which port they are sent to England for embarkation to the United States. I attach herewith copy of the usual letter sent by Doctor Lowenstein, the representative at Bucharest, Roumania, of the Jewish Colonization Association, addressed to the Jewish congregation at Budapest, together with a translation thereof, advising said congregation of the near approach of a group of such Jewish emigrants, attaching also hereto a copy of a list of names of such group of emigrants, marked "Exhibit J."

With reference to prostitutes and women imported for the purpose of prostitution, I have made several reports to the Department, and, reiterating the same, I beg to report in addition as follows: In the cities of Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Budapest, Lemberg, Krakow, and more particularly in Warsaw and Wilna, I learned that annually a number of women and men engaged in this nefarious business here in the United States pay visits to the places above enumerated and invariably a number of such immoral women follow them to the United States. In many instances these women are provided with American passports or citizen papers of

290 IMPORTED AMERICANS

their alleged husbands residing in the United States, and so widespread did I find this traffic in, and issuance of, American passports in Austria-Hungary, that I deemed it my duty to call the attention of the Hon. Bellamy Storer, United States ambassador and envoy plenipotentiary at Vienna, to the disgraceful practice, who again, on his part, instructed the United States consulates under his jurisdiction to be very careful hereafter before transmitting requests for passports for women intending to go to the United States to join their alleged husbands, and whose citizen papers are generally annexed to these requests.

I have the honor also to report that the Hon. Frank D. Chester, United States consul at Budapest, Hungary, informed me that there was quite a traffic in United States passports and citizen papers carried on at the city of Fiume, and that one of his attachés had some time ago made a special investigation and reported about it, I believe, to the State Department at Washington. In this latter instance, it is my opinion that the passports and citizen papers are used mostly for contract laborers, for the reason that, as I convinced myself during my travel through Switzerland, a similar traffic is carried on there for the use of contract laborers, who mostly come to Switzerland from the southern part of Austria, Croatia, and Dalmatia, the business of these countries, in the way of emigration, being done mostly by steamship agents located in Switzerland. There is no doubt that hundreds and hundreds of citizen papers are being sent from the United States to Europe annually for just these purposes.

Another practice which I observed during my trip is that most emigrants are in possession of cards of all kinds of boarding houses, emigrant agencies, and "Homes" of all nationalities and in all cities of the United States. I attach hereto one of said cards, of which thousands can be obtained daily, and mark it "Exhibit K."

I have pointed out very frequently the fact that steamship companies are unable to ascertain the admissibility

LEGISLATION AND EVASION 291

to the United States of emigrants who present themselves prior to their embarkation, except through the medical examination and the questions put to each of them, before the final ticket is issued. If the emigrant is not well enough instructed by those who originally sent him on his road, it happens that his inadmissibility is occasionally detected, as I have noticed at the offices of the Hamburg-American, Red Star, and Holland-American lines, at the ports of Hamburg, Antwerp, and Rotterdam respectively, but this is rarely the case. The emigrant is most thoroughly instructed when he reaches the offices of the steamship companies, having undergone perhaps two or more special courses of instruction at the hands of the so-called subagents; but should the answers of such emigrant, in spite of this instruction, be found faulty in certain respects, it would be idle to assume that the agencies would refuse to forward him; a striking example, illustrating this circumstance, may be found in an article of the Italian newspaper *Il Dovere*, published in the city of Bellinzona, Switzerland, bearing date June 23, 1903, a copy of which I annex hereto, marked "Exhibit L." The article in question will be found on the second page of said exhibit, marked with blue pencil, which was sent from Chiasso under like date, relating the story of an Italian emigrant by the name of Marcaccio Vincenzo, who on May 2, 1903, sailed for New York on board the North-German Lloyd steamer *Friedrich der Grosse*, accompanied by a woman who had deserted her husband, in the same manner that said Vincenzo deserted his wife, and both of whom, upon their arrival at Ellis Island, were duly deported.

The article further states that Vincenzo returned to Chiasso and went to the agency of Jauch & Pellegrini, where he had purchased the tickets for himself and the woman, and demanded the return of his money, which of course was refused. Vincenzo thereupon went to the authorities and made a sworn statement to the effect that at the time of purchasing the tickets mentioned he told the firm of Jauch & Pellegrini that the woman accompanying him was not his wife, and that he was

292 IMPORTED AMERICANS

then and there instructed by said firm that upon his arrival at New York he must state that the woman accompanying him was his wife. The case of this emigrant was disposed of in a very simple manner; he was sent across the border to Italy and sentenced to eight months' imprisonment for deserting his wife and committing adultery. The woman in question was likewise sent to jail for eight months.

I was informed at Chiasso by the other steamship agents that they had reported this case to their respective companies, requesting that the agency be withdrawn from Jauch & Pellegrini, as occurrences of this kind had a tendency to harm them in their business, but that nothing was done by the steamship companies in this direction. I was also informed that the real owners of the firm of Jauch & Pellegrini are the notorious firm of Corecco & Brivio, at Bodio, Switzerland, who are the general agents of the *Compagnie Générale Transatlantique*, and to whom reference was made by Special Immigrant-Inspector Robert Watchorn, in his report of August, 1902—Corecco & Brivio are likewise the owners of *La Svizzera Società Anonima per l' Emigrazione*, at Chiasso, representing the Beaver Line.

The material collected and the observations made during my travels abroad would permit of the citation of hundreds, even thousands, of other instances of a similar character, and those above enumerated are but individual cases selected from an abundance of equally flagrant examples. We cannot escape the conclusion that a large number of undesirable emigrants succeed in reaching our shores in spite of the vigorous enforcement of our immigration laws at the Atlantic seaports as well as the Canadian border, and in spite of the apparent good faith on the part of the steamship companies to comply with such laws. Although this undesirable emigration still continues, yet it is my observation that it has materially decreased in the past year or so, because of the fact that it is generally known throughout the Continent that our laws, as at present administered, are being strictly enforced and

LEGISLATION AND EVASION 293

every effort made to detect undesirable immigrants and to return them upon such detection. If it were not for the precautions taken and the excellent work at our various immigrant stations, as well as the apparent desire of the various steamship companies to comply with the law, undesirable immigration would have increased to alarming proportions. I do not mean to be understood that the law in its present state is in a perfect condition, for it still leaves open loopholes for unscrupulous steamship agents and their dupes, who succeed in one form or other in evading the law, in spite of the vigilance of the officials under your jurisdiction.

I am confirmed in this statement by my observance of many instances in point, particularly the fact that a large number of deported and refused emigrants never return to their homes, despite the fact that steamship companies provide them with railroad tickets and necessary transportation to convey them to their homes.

A significant feature in this connection is the exhibition to me by Mr. A. Storm, manager of the passenger department of the Hamburg-American Line, of a letter addressed to him by the director of the Royal Prussian Railroad at Altona, substantially to the effect that the railroad authorities would hereafter decline to redeem, at their full value, unused portions of railroad tickets for points at the Austrian and Russian frontier presented by passengers at Berlin, but would deduct twenty per cent therefrom for the trouble and inconvenience caused by the redemption of so large a number of these tickets. It is evident, therefore, that some secret agency is at work deflecting from their homes to parts unknown such deported passengers who arrive at Berlin. One reason for such deported and refused emigrants not returning to their homes was given me by Mr. Max Hirschfeld, manager of the Anglo-Continentales Reise-Bureau, at Rotterdam, which, in its zeal and activity, is second only to F. Missler, at Bremen, in an interview which I had with him. He frankly admitted to me that it had been and is his purpose, when passen-

294 IMPORTED AMERICANS

gers booked by him are refused or deported, to prevent them from reaching their homes, for the reason that it would injure his business to have it spread in the community that passengers booked by him were not admitted into the United States, and in order to accomplish this he cited cases to me where he spent as much as \$100 on individuals for such purpose.

Taking all of the above, together with the experience gained and the observations made as a basis, the situation can be summed up as follows:

The deplorable political and financial conditions of the eastern and southern countries of Europe, coupled with the prosperous condition of the United States, creates a large natural emigration to our shores. The most convincing proof in the eyes of the people of these countries of the exceptional prosperity of our country is the large sums of money, almost unprecedented to them, which annually arrive from friends and relatives residing in the United States. Besides this natural emigration, however, we are burdened with a dangerous and most injurious unnatural immigration which from year to year assumes larger proportions. This unnatural emigration consists of paupers and assisted emigrants, and is induced and brought about by the unscrupulous and greedy activity displayed by a large number of agencies and subagencies having well-established connections in the United States and abroad, apparently unknown to the steamship companies, which activity manifests itself in the peddling of steamship tickets and prepaids on the instalment plan, both here and abroad, the constant agitation and offers of inducements by subagents in Europe, occupying semi-public positions, who, in order to earn commissions, play upon the ignorance and susceptibility of the plain peasant, frequently inducing him to sell or mortgage all his belongings for the purpose of raising the necessary traveling expenses, which latter transaction is also turned to profit by such agent.

The steamship companies of course do not concede the existence of such unnatural emigration, as I learned in the course of an interview which I had with a high

LEGISLATION AND EVASION 295

official of one of the steamship companies abroad. I called his attention to this unnatural emigration, but the prevalence of the same was denied by him. "If all this emigration is brought about by natural causes," said I, "and the business would come to you any way, why do you have so many agencies broadcast instead of opening offices under your direct supervision and control, thus saving the commissions you have to pay your agents?" He replied, that would necessitate the employment of a large corps of clerks and assistants, and that the maintenance of such offices would, in the end, result in the expenditure of a much larger sum of money than is paid out in commissions. This argument, of course, does not in the least refute the well-established fact that there is a very considerable unnatural emigration caused and augmented through the agencies and methods above enumerated.

I am not prepared to say that there are remedies to combat this evil, but I respectfully submit and state most emphatically that the influx of this undesirable element into the United States could be reduced very materially if means were adopted to procure the names, addresses, and, if necessary, the pedigrees of persons constituting this class of undesirable emigrants. All of the countries visited by me keep public records of paupers, criminals, ex-convicts, prostitutes, and diseased; and such records are obtainable, and if placed at the disposal of proper United States officials the information thus at hand would obviate the necessity of relying upon the statement of the emigrant himself, and would tend to keep out of the United States an element which annually invades our shores in so large a number.

The contract-labor question is somewhat more complex. It is undeniably true that great numbers of contract laborers are annually imported into the United States, which fact is well-known to Government officials abroad. If the statement made to me by Herr Franz von Kaltenbrunn, Councilor to the Ministry of the Interior of Austria, can be taken as an argument in point, it establishes this importation of contract

296 IMPORTED AMERICANS

labor beyond a doubt. Herr von Kaltenbrunn, in the interview which I had with him, exhibited to me a rough sketch of an emigration bill, in the drafting of which he was then engaged and which he said is to be submitted to the next session of the Reichsrath (Lower House of Austrian Parliament), such bill being designed for the protection of Austrian subjects who are being engaged to work abroad, by requiring the contractor or his representative to furnish a guarantee or some form of security to the effect that the promises and agreements contained in the contract made with such laborer, such as safe passage, payment of wages promised, etc., will be closely adhered to. Irrespective of this proposed legislation, it would be very difficult, as stated in the body of my report, to detect the fact that any such person actually travels to the United States under contract of labor, and in my opinion there are but two ways to discover this fact, one being that some means be found to watch the emigrants prior to their reaching the ports of embarkation, and the other by close scrutiny and questioning at the various landing ports of the United States. If the various boards of special inquiry were aided by attorneys at law assigned to them, a twofold object would be accomplished; first, it would lead to the discovery of the importer of contract labor himself, and, secondly, it would dispel the prevailing opinion abroad that a large number of persons are constantly deported from the United States as contract laborers who, in truth and in fact, are alleged to be going to the United States in good faith and not under contract, which I believe is frequently the case and is due to the fact that the unfortunate emigrant becomes so confused by the manifold advices and instructions he receives prior to his arrival that he is made to believe things he has never intended to say. The assignment of counsel to the various boards of special inquiry would also aid them in every other respect.

Respectfully submitted.

MARCUS BRAUN,
Special Immigrant Inspector.

CHAPTER XXII

WHAT TO DO WITH THE IMMIGRANT

AFTER long and careful study of all the many and complex phases of the immigration question, I have formed a clear and definite idea of what should be done with the immigrant. The first suggestion of it came to me when I saw how grossly I, in common with other Americans of the class that is informed on the average concerning these things, misunderstood the aliens who come to our shores, and when I perceived the first indications of preparation of lies to be told at Naples and at Ellis Island, in order to evade the laws of the United States. Slowly it was demonstrated to me that any system which makes inspection dependent on the word of the immigrant or his friends is radically wrong. Only a conscientious analysis of the whole system allowed me to formulate the proposition I am about to state, and I do it without prejudice, but with strong conviction that it is the correct solution of the gigantic problem.

Immigration must be either controlled and directed or it must be abolished, and the last-named alternative is eliminated by common sense and considerations of a humane nature. We need the immigrants. Our nation owes its strength to-day to those who have crossed the ocean in other years. Our great industries need their brawn, our undeveloped regions need their toil, and we can easily accept 150,000,000 more human beings as raw material; but they must come as raw

298 IMPORTED AMERICANS

material,—good raw material. That given, our civic atmosphere, our conditions, our national spirit must do the rest, and patriots must look to the children of the immigrants for the best results rather than to the immigrants themselves.

Diseased, deformed, or physically insufficient persons are not and never can be good raw material, and should not be allowed to leave their homes, nor should any members of their families on whom they are, or are likely to be, dependent.

Convicts, prostitutes, persons engaged in questionable pursuits, anarchists, radical socialists, and political agitators are a menace to the body politic, though reasonable inability to make a livelihood should be considered a mark of pauperism rather than failure to accumulate any property whatsoever under European conditions.

The true conditions of all such persons is readily ascertainable from the civic, police, and military records in the communes of their residence, to which can be added the supplemental evidence of their neighbors and the local officials of the communes. In the communes of their nativity the truth is known and cannot be hidden. At the ports of embarkation combined influences can deceive the best officials. At the ports of arrival the hand of the inspector is still weaker, no matter how thorough the examination or how excellent the system.

The conclusion is plain: seek the grounds on which to deny passage to emigrants who wish to come to the United States, in the villages from which they emanate.

What seems to me to be the best plan to do this, to keep the expense below that which it is at present, and to avoid the opportunities which are sure to be presented for wholesale corruption of American officials

by the transportation interests and by the emigrants themselves, is this:

Select emigrants before itinerant boards of two, three, or more native-born Americans who speak fluently and understand thoroughly the language and dialects of the people who come before them,—these boards to be on a civil-service basis.

The long diplomatic delays and ensuing red tape of incorporating the privileges of these boards in treaties with the several European governments can be avoided by temporary operation under the present consular system of the United States, and little objection would be met with from any of the governments from whose domains the immigrants come.

In districts from which the emigration is profuse at present, a smaller number of communes and a more frequent visitation should be the regulation. The sittings of the boards should be announced by advertisements a sufficient length of time in advance to allow all persons contemplating emigration to prepare to appear for examination. Examiners should be prepared to furnish information as to destinations and opportunities, and could, with care, prevent an increase of the congestion in the cities of the East. In extremity, regulations could be made which would allow them to deny clearance and passage to persons desirous of going to districts already over-populated with aliens.

As to the requirements for admission to the United States, our present code of laws has them well defined except in the matter of illiteracy, and my personal observation has been that illiteracy does not interfere either with the value of an immigrant to the civic body or with the rapidity of his absorption among us; in fact, the educated class cling more tenaciously to all

300 IMPORTED AMERICANS

that is Old Worldly, and are more inclined to hold political views that are at variance with our system of government. That a man cannot read or write his native tongue does not make him any the worse piece of raw material here.

When a party of emigrants has been passed and given papers with photographic identification as well as detailed physical description, with a time limit of use of thirty days, it should be instructed as to baggage so as to minimize this aggravating feature, and should depart under the charge of a courier, going to the nearest port of transatlantic departure. This would work a great change in emigrant-carrying lines, but is plainly the most convenient and economical procedure for all concerned. The party could be delivered directly on board on the day of sailing, and thus all the frauds and grafting schemes would be avoided. The saving to emigrants by this method would more than pay for the expenses of the examination.

It is easy to see how these visiting boards could promote emigration among the classes which are most desirable in northern and central Europe, and are now so chary of coming. Families which have something to lose by being turned back from the United States are loath to dispose of their property and make the venture. If they knew they were certain of admission before they left their homes, a year's time would see the level of the grade of emigrants greatly elevated.

Of reforms in transportation, little need be said. Closed cabins and service of food for groups of six or eight, with an American Marine Hospital Service surgeon in charge of each ship, would bring about all that is needed, with a few minor regulations.

Ellis Island and the smaller immigrant stations should

continue their functions much as they are now, only that little hospital room and deportation quarters would be needed; the registry feature would be decreased to an examination of papers for admittance and to the maintenance of the excellent card-index system. The distribution and detention features would necessarily be continued.

To the card-index system should be added a regulation compelling all aliens to report, at regular intervals, their whereabouts and pursuits, to federal officials in federal judicial districts, until such time as they become citizens of the country or are ready to depart. A most important feature of this should be the indexing and tabulation of the hundreds of thousands of able-bodied men who have had the excellent military training of the armies of Europe, and would, if properly organized, constitute a fine reserve force in America of at least 2,000,000 men.

Deportation is the severest punishment which can fall on an alien in comparison with anything less than several years' imprisonment, and all admissions to the country should be made probationary; the commission of any crime or crimes, and conviction therefor, to be followed by punishment and *then by deportation*. Many of the minor crimes committed by aliens are done with the intention of getting two or three years in prison in which to learn to read and write English and acquire a trade.

The practical statesman will at once object to this programme on the ground of the terrific expense of maintaining thousands of men in Europe to constitute these boards of examiners. By careful computation I have ascertained that it would cost approximately two dollars per head to examine and admit each immi-

302 IMPORTED AMERICANS

grant, whereas at this time it costs each immigrant nearly five dollars to be examined, inasmuch as the extra expense to which the steamship company goes is added to the price of his ticket. Over and above this the money he relinquishes to grafters, subagents, advisers, etc., totals a sum that is beyond reckoning.

Summing up, this plan would achieve in simple fashion the following things:

Undesirable emigrants would be prevented from leaving their homes.

Ruin and suffering would not fall on those now sent back.

Desirable immigration would be wonderfully stimulated.

Practices of officials of foreign governments in dumping into this country criminals, foundlings, agitators, etc., would be ended.

Emigrants would be protected and great economy in travel would be effected.

Smuggling and underground methods would be discontinued and contract-labor frauds prevented.

Naturalization frauds would cease to avail, and legal naturalization would be greatly increased.

Custom-house officers would be greatly assisted, revenues increased, and goods-smuggling minimized.

The proper distribution of the flood of immigration would be at all times under the control of the American government.

Immigration would cease to be affected, to its detriment, by the business competition of transportation companies interested solely in conveying as many aliens to America and back and forth again as often as possible, without any regard whatsoever to the class of people carried, so long as they have the money

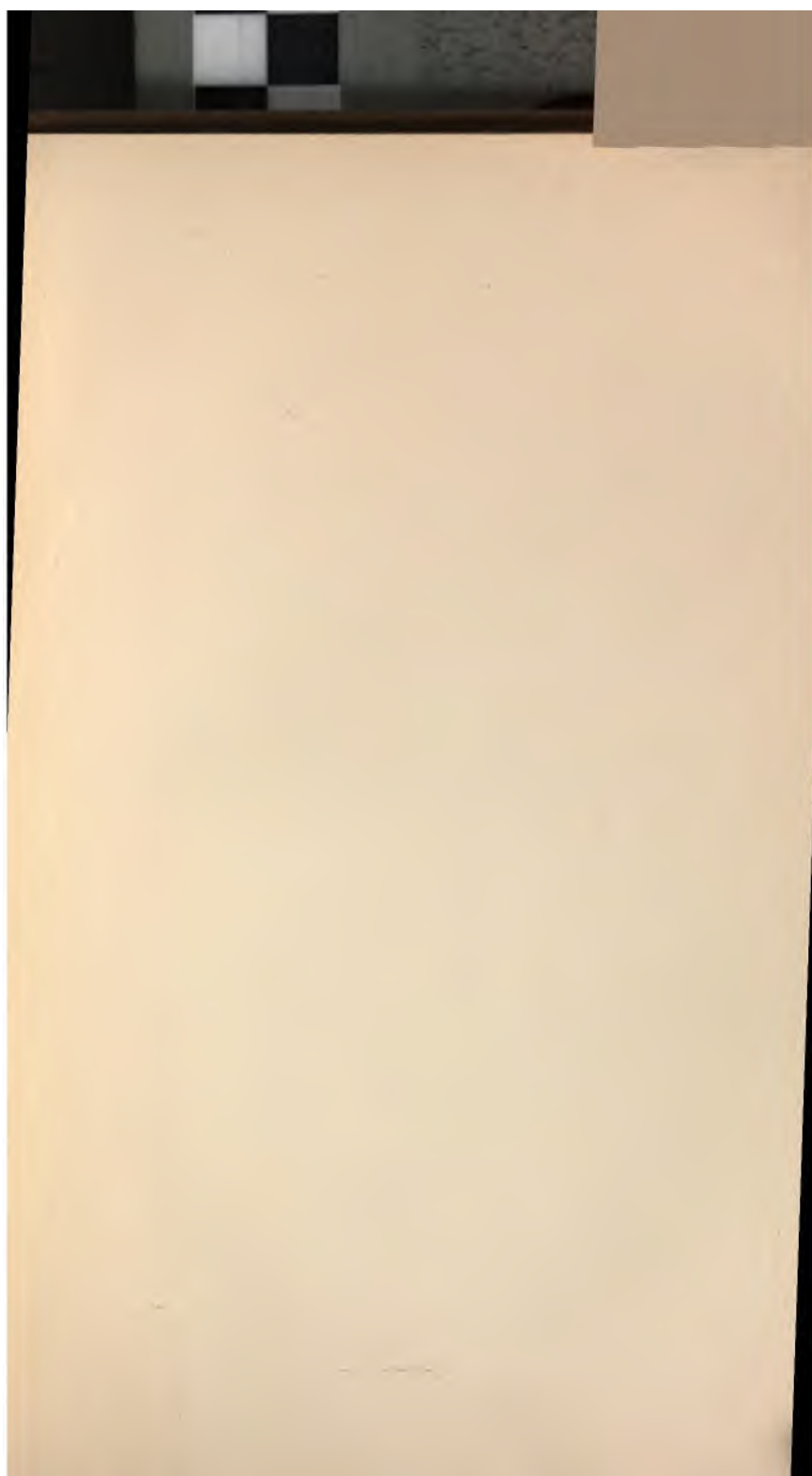
THE IMMIGRANT 303

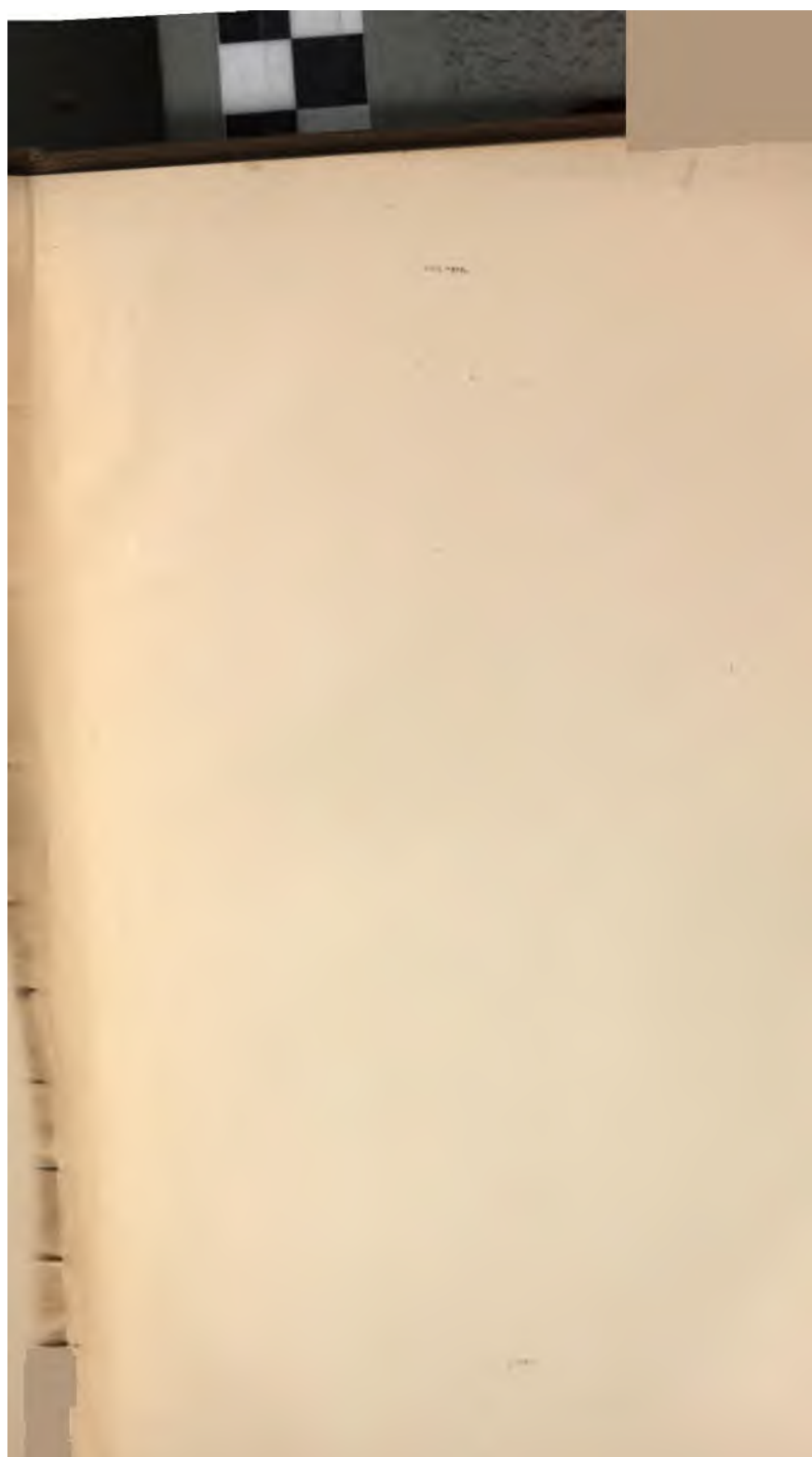
to pay the fares and swell the enormous profits that emigrant-carriers realize at present.

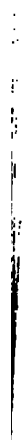
When these things are achieved, there is no one to deny that the immigration problem will have been solved, unless it be those who are ignorant and prejudiced in the matter, or who profit by the continued depression of the grade coupled with the increase in volume of immigration which mark the present condition in a way to cause every true American, who has the best interests of his country at heart, to look to the future with uncertainty and dread.

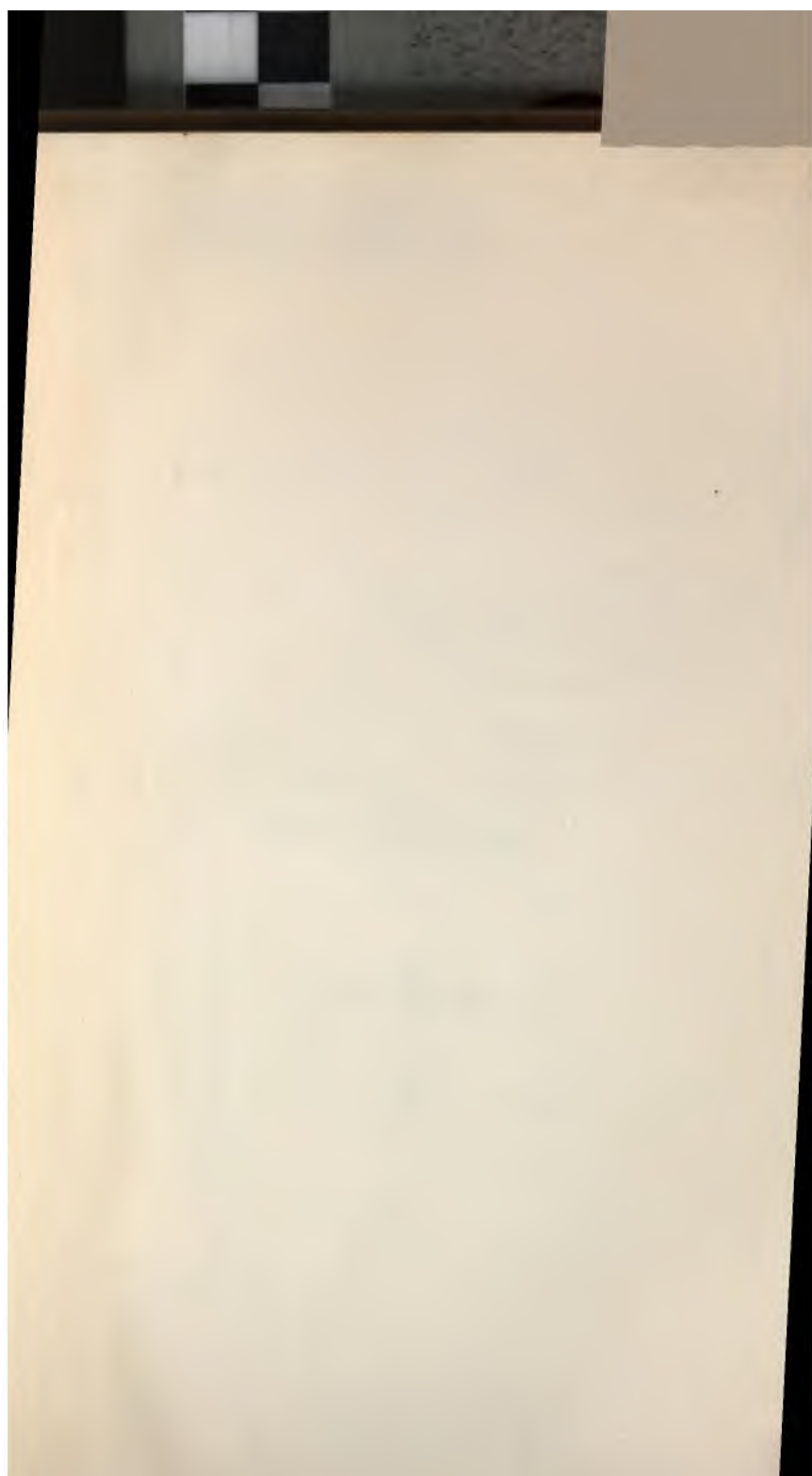
THE END

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and dates.









Stanford University Libraries



3 6105 010 199 045

325.73
B817

STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
STANFORD AUXILIARY LIBRARY
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305-6004
(415) 723-9201
All books may be recalled after 7 days

DATE DUE

DOC JUL 26 1995

MAY 19 1996

JUN 28 1999

JUN 11 1999

